

Farmers' Co-operative Stores

The practicability and success of Co-operation demonstrated by the Right Relationship League, which has organized nearly 150 Co-operative Stores in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Dakota

By MARVIN E. TOWNSEND

Co-operation has succeeded in America and is succeeding today. It can, and is succeeding in Canada as well as in the States. The farmers have the spirit to do it right, and to them the cities will have to go for rules of success.

Some sleepy one may ask: "Why is it necessary to Co-operate? Why not let business go on as it is? Why all this talk about Co-operation and justice and brotherhood? Do not the churches and fraternal societies preach and teach brotherhood?" Yes, these principles have been preached and taught for hundreds and hundreds of years. But have they been practised—in business?

The Great Teacher and practical demonstrator of Brotherhood stated some two thousand years ago: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." The serious problems that now confront both the church and the state I verily believe are occasioned by the attention of men being taken up with the accumulation of wealth, to almost the entire exclusion of the command of the lowly Nazarene, that we should love God with all our hearts and our neighbors as ourselves.

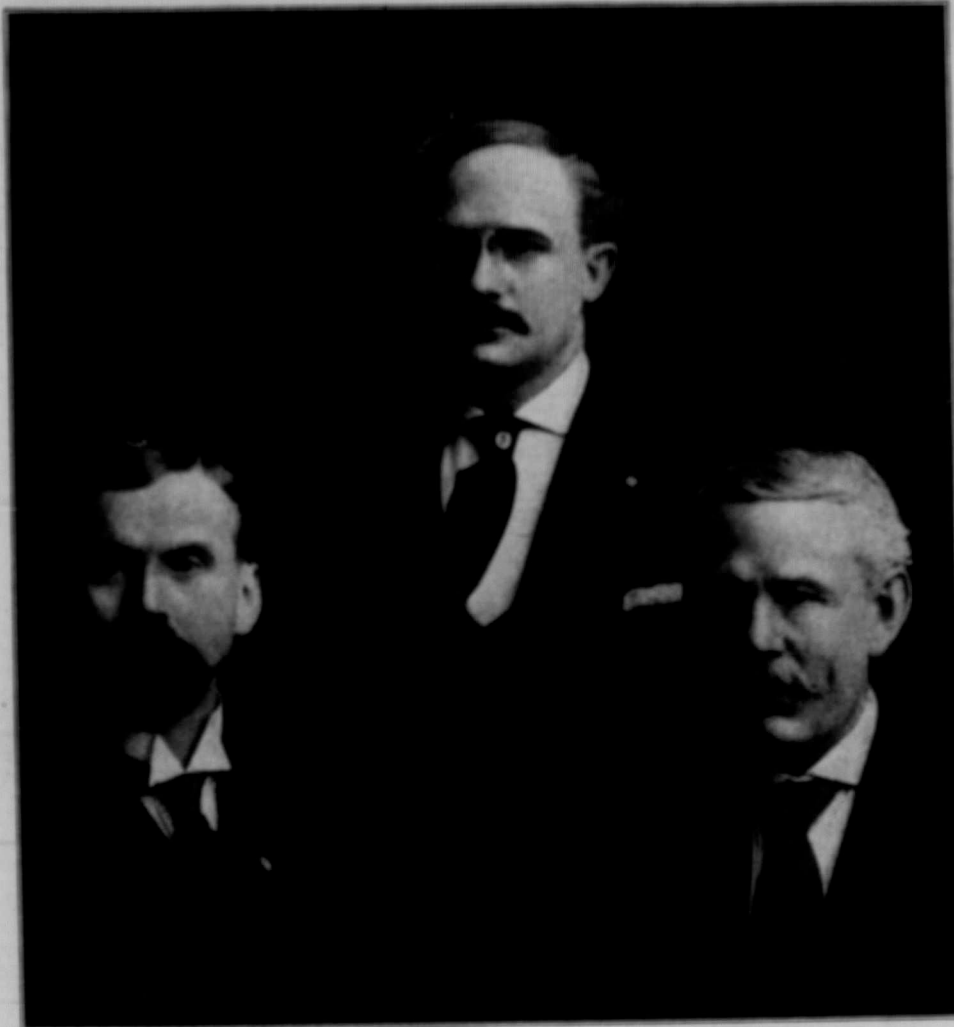
The Almighty Dollar

Profit-making and profit-taking business has become the dominating factor in practically every man's life. Each individual in his own small way is imitating the captains of industry in an attempt to fitch all the profit he can from his neighbors. As long as he does this he has no right to criticize big trusts and combines, nor extremely wealthy persons. To such an alarming extent does this profit-making and profit-taking spirit permeate the whole of society that the domination of wealth—"predatory wealth," as former President Roosevelt termed it, "big business," "the system," as others term it—has become so great, so overbearing, and so arrogant that the best economic, political, financial, and social authorities agree that the American nation today is on the verge of mob rule and in greater danger than it was in the days of '61.

Mr. Roosevelt, in a letter to Prof. Edward Alsworth Ross, commenting on the latter's book "Sin and Society," said: "As you well say, if a ring is to be put in the snout of the greedy strong, only organized society can do it. You war against the vast iniquities in modern business, finance, politics, and journalism due to the ineffectiveness of public opinion in coping with the dominant types of wrongdoing in a huge, rich, highly complex industrial civilization like ours." He further said: "Our moral judgment must be recast in order more effectively to hold to account the really dangerous foes of our present civilization."

Champions Needed

Prof. Ross himself, in his book, says: "If you want a David and Goliath fight, you must attack the powers that prey, not on the vices of the lax, but on the necessities of the decent. The deferred dividend graft, the 'yellow dog' fund, the private car iniquity . . . confront us rampant, fire-belching, sabre-toothed and razor-clawed. They are able to gag critics, hobble investigators, hood the press, and muzzle the law. Drunk with power, in office and club, in church and school, in legislature and court, they boldly make their stand, ruining the



Officers of the Right Relationship League: E. M. TOUSLEY, secretary-treasurer; W. F. VEDDER, vice-president; E. J. VAN HORN, president

innocent, shredding the reputation of the righteous, destroying the careers and opportunities of their assailants, dragging down pastor and scholar, publicist and business man, from livelihood and influence, unhorsing alike faithful public servant, civic champion, and knight errant of conscience, and all the while gathering into loathsome captivity the souls of multitudes of young men. Here is a fight where blows

are rained, and armour dented, and wounds suffered, and laurels won. If a sworn champion of the right will prove he is a man and not a dummy, let him go up against these!"

Workers are Hoodwinked

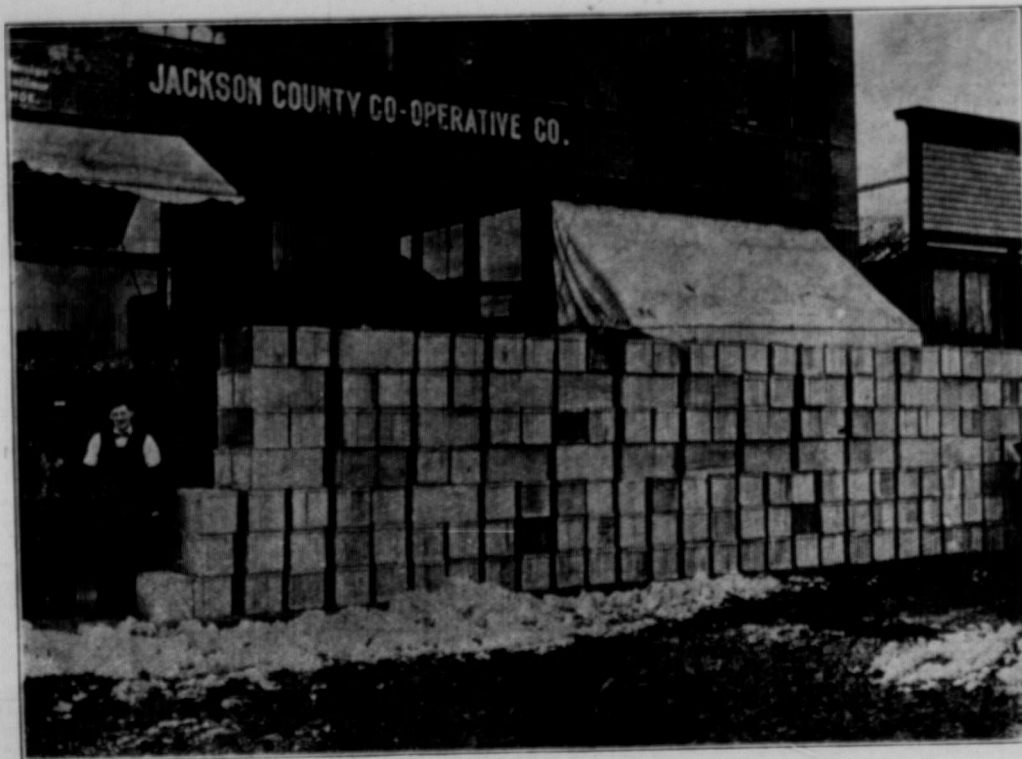
This, then, is the situation today, and the half has not been told. Perhaps no phase of the economic and financial situation is so fraught with pos-

sibilities for good or evil to the masses of the people as the banking question. In nearly every little country bank, and from it clear up through the entire chain of the big banks and trust companies of the largest cities, the people have on deposit from ten to twenty-five times as much of their own money as the stockholders have invested in the capital stock of the banks. These deposits of the people put the very weapon into the hands of the "special privilege few" with which to further exploit the people. As a result, the workers themselves—and this term includes the farmers—create and perpetuate all the special privilege there is.

All this time "Big Business" quietly chuckles in his sleeve at the silliness and utter lack of foresight on the part of the dear people who are cursing "political henchmen" with their mouths and continually, industriously, and uncomplainingly working with all other members of their bodies to create more profits for these same big business interests and meekly handing it to them and, in effect, saying: "You take this money, 'Big Business'; you know how to run business and I don't; besides, I don't want to take any of the risk or bother my head about business. I am busy working hard to create more profits for 'the system' and cannot think of using up my time or brain power in an endeavor to help myself or my neighbor. Besides, if I co-operate with my neighbor he might possibly, by some hook or crook, get the advantage of me a few cents or dimes or dollars, and I could never stand for that; I would rather it should all go to 'the system' in the same good old way. 'The system' knows how to use it to good advantage and will assume all risk. I know the risk is not great when we, my neighbors and I, furnish to 'the system' all its money by reason of the profits created by our buying and selling power, and that with this money we, ourselves, actually create all the 'special privilege' there is, because 'the system' immediately uses this money—our profits—to put through such legislation as will practically eliminate all risk to 'the interests.'"

The question naturally arises, How long will it take for the farmers and other workers to see the point and to act accordingly? The ills of our social, political, and financial world are economic, pure and simple. John Graham Brooks says: "Change business and we change politics." True as gospel. Have we the nerve, the ability, and the loyalty to make the attempt, and, after having started, to stick to it though the heavens fall? Mr. Brooks also says it will "test us as by fire" and that it will "take well through this century" to accomplish the reform of democratizing business. Had we not better begin now with the tools at hand—the American Rochdale plan of voluntary co-operation?

A majority of the families in large cities are less than sixty days away from hunger and starvation in case their income is cut off by either sickness, death, or the action of the captains of industry who are in control of the wealth of the nation and the machinery of production. And this situation is being intensified yearly and monthly by the further concentration of



200 Cases of Eggs in front of the Jackson County Co-operative Store, Lakeville, Minnesota

Continued on Page 21