

# Co-operation Among Farmers

## Ethical Principles Involved

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In co-operation, confidence, loyalty, unselfishness, self control, and mutual helpfulness are the parents of all progress. As another has said, "Co-operation is the coming redemption. Nothing else will save mankind from the selfishness, the immorality, and the extent of misery it suffers from. Nothing else will prevent a repetition of the decline and fall of nations of which history is full."

In any co-operative enterprise the participants therein must have faith and confidence in each other and in their neighbors. The family is the foundation of the nation. Without faith and confidence, any family circle will be broken up in less than twenty-four hours. If the husband loses faith in the wife or the wife in the husband, the home is destroyed and the children left to shift for themselves.

We cannot define faith.

I have never heard anyone define it satisfactorily. We can see the results of faith, but it cannot be defined. A contented and happy family circle is one of the finest examples of a display of faith and confidence to be found anywhere. Underneath all is love. If, then, the very existence of the family and of the nation depends upon confidence, faith, and love, how can we expect the co-operative society to be successful unless these same principles are found in it? We must cast out suspicion and extend to our fellow men our full confidence, believing that if we are willing to enter into a business arrangement wherein the principles of the Golden Rule are to be applied, they are willing to meet us half way on the same basis. If, then, confidence and faith in our fellow men has been laid as a foundation, we are ready to rear the superstructure.

We can now begin to build substantial walls upon this solid foundation, within which peace, happiness and plenty may finally dwell. One of these four walls is loyalty. So far as the individual is concerned, in defending one's country dollars do not count. If, while we are gathered here today, the president of the United States should flash over the wires the information that war had been declared against us by some powerful nation, and he should call for a million volunteers, we know they would be forthcoming very soon. Not a man in this audience, unless incapacitated by age or bodily infirmity, but would be willing to shoulder his rifle and, to the beating of drums and the waving of flags, march to the defense of his country. Would he first ask how much money there was in it for him? No!—We call this the spirit of patriotism; but, I want to say to you that it requires greater patriotism to intelligently organize and loyally support a co-operative business enterprise than it does to defend your country against a known common foe. Can the plain people be depended upon to display this loyalty? If an enemy of co-operation says to you that your co-operative store or society is going to fail and you will lose the money you have invested in it, will you, like a coward, turn your back

on your neighbors, turn traitor to your principles, and fly to the ranks of the enemy?

Out of the mouths of some of the best posted and influential statesmen of the day, I have heard the statement time and time again, and it is being published broadcast in reform papers and magazines that, 'this nation is in greater danger today than it was in the days of '61; that under the private profit-making and competitive systems, which knows only the heartless law of 'the survival of the fittest,' concentration of wealth has reached such a stage of advanced power that not even those captains of industry who control this accumulated wealth have any conception of where it will land them or the nation, or what will be the conditions existing among the common people, should this power be used to its limit.' If we were marching in battle array to repel an invading army, we should have the enemy in plain view so as to know

and infinitely greater profits to be eventually realized in his own brotherhood organization if he remains loyal.

### Unselfishness

The second wall in our superstructure must be unselfishness. Trusts are selfish. Ownership of shares is unequal and unlimited. Voting power is in proportion to money invested, so that the richest always control. Profits are distributed in proportion to money invested, so that the already rich become increasingly richer off the earnings of labor, the unearned increment, and God's natural resources. Wm. Allen White said in his article, "The Partnership of Society," in the American Magazine for October, 1906:—

"The whole of high finance has been shaken in the five years last passed by exposures which show how men in frock coats would steal and cheat and swear falsely—not for bread and butter, not for

outlaws as they were who were cast upon the desert to perish. And a pressing duty upon every man who sees the wrongs of this partnership is to right them, in so far as he is able.

"It is true that the unhappiest men in the world are those who have smothered their natural desire to help their fellows. No man is happy who has killed his conscience. But while he is suffering, his wickedness is making others suffer; his stolen luxury takes comfort from hundreds. Every idler in our system, rich or poor, is a social cancer which burns in the vitals of civilization. And it is our duty to our suffering fellows to so change the social and financial system that the idler will have to serve. Soon all the world must come to realize that civilization is built for a purpose, and that purpose is the development of human souls through the development of the spirit of brotherhood. Certainly that is a practical end for a practical world. For the development of brotherhood should be humanity's chief end."

### Brotherhood Principles

How, then, is this to be accomplished? I answer, by reforming the corporation. Substitute the brotherhood principles of the Rochdale system for those of the corporation principles. Much has been said and written about reforming the corporation. President Taft has submitted his remedy to Congress, which is that all large corporations must come under a national law. It matters little whether the corporation laws which grant these franchises to the trusts are national or state; the vital question is as to the principles involved in the law itself. I am but one of the poor laymen of society, almost unknown and unheard of. I make no pretense of superior wisdom, and would not for a moment think of comparing my business judgment or

legal knowledge with that of President Taft and his corporation advisors; but I want to say unqualifiedly that neither President Taft nor Mr. Roosevelt, nor Mr. Bryan, nor Mr. La Follette, nor any of the so-called insurgents of the House or Senate, have yet touched upon, spoken of, or written about the one vital principle in the reform of the corporation, which, if adopted, will genuinely reform it and largely, if not almost entirely, eliminate the evils which confront our nation, its business, and society generally.

The most beneficent law ever placed on our statute books was, and is, the homestead law, providing for the distribution among the common people of the tremendously valuable landed domain in this country. Fortunately, it had in it certain restrictions, among them these: That a man could acquire no more than 160 acres of land, that he must live upon the land and improve it for five years, at the end of which time he received his title from the government practically free of charge. As a result, a large proportion of the vast area of rich lands in the United States has become the homes of contented and happy families. With-

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THE HON. R. L. BORDEN and a portion of his Cabinet, from a photograph taken in the Privy Council Chamber. Commencing at the left and reading round the table the members of the Cabinet seen in the above picture are:—Hon. Martin Burrell, minister of agriculture; Hon. L. P. Pelletier, postmaster-general; Hon. Senator Lougheed, minister without portfolio; Hon. Robert Rogers, minister of the interior; Hon. George E. Foster, minister of trade and commerce; Hon. R. L. Borden, prime minister and president of the council; Hon. G. H. Perley, minister without portfolio; Hon. F. D. Monk, minister of public works.

where to attack and shoot most effectively in our own defense. But the enemy that confronts us in the business world is a hidden foe, more powerful and more insidious than an army with banners. He invades our supreme courts, our halls of congress, our state law-making bodies, our tariff department, our weighers of sugar, our national resources, our forestry department, our postal department, our banks, our trust companies, our great corporations, our small corporations, our churches, our press and even our homes. He comes like a thief in the night and insidiously worms his way into all these institutions and into the minds of most formerly honorable men, and when he is discovered it is either too late or we tolerate the companionship of this monster called greed because of the financial advantage, or because the love of honor is lying latent within our breasts. He even invades the co-operative society, and often a supposed loyal co-operator will be inveigled into patronizing his private profit-making competitor, who is his own and his neighbors' business enemy, because he can buy a pound of cheese or a peck of potatoes two cents cheaper than he can in his own store, forgetting the ultimate benefits

the comforts of life, not even for the luxuries that money will bring—they might have had these things honestly—but for the lust of money. Society has moved far enough away from the jungle so that he who cripples and kills in the struggle for a mate is outlawed; but it is the problem of this generation and the next, and the next to civilize the conscienceless devil of malicious greed out of the hearts of men. As the ages have passed we have done some things to check this love of money in the hearts of men. In so much as the race has pulled up those roots, in just so much it has advanced.

"Our civilization must adjust itself so that its judgments will be fair between men, or it too will perish from the earth. Our partnership is a vast industrial organization; where the clan or the tribe of Isaac and of Jacob had ten men, we have ten thousand, yet essentially the basis of partnership is the same. It is the centripetal force of life. We live together now because we cannot live separately, just as the patriarchs gathered their tribesmen about them in the dawn of time. And we must serve our fellows in this vast industrial system, or we are