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THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 1934

The Acreage Reduction Contracts.

Should a tobacco grower sign the reduction contract, through which he rents his idle acres to the Government for money rent? What will he gain by signing and what will he lose, if he doesn't sign?

We have heard these questions asked many times in the last few days and The Mercury has not attempted to answer. For one thing, the farmer is "advised" to death by editorial writers who wouldn't know a Randall barrow from a bull-rake and he has gotten used to such advice, so that he sheds it as nonchalantly as a duck sheds water. So this writer, who knows that he would sign that contract and sign it now, were he a planter of tobacco, has refrained from adding to the chorus of advice with which the farmer is pestered. Your farmer is going to do pretty much as he darn pleases after all, gratuitous editorial and "expert" advice to the contrary. And he is going to do it, frequently to his sorrow.

But we will, however, point out what the Government's agricultural recovery measures have done for the cotton planters of the South, who founder in much the same one-crop rut as our tobacco growers. Last year they were getting 5 and 6 cents for their cotton; this year cotton is up to 9 or 10 cents. Why? Simply because a million acres growers cut their acreage, plowed up growing cotton and received in return checks totaling $110,000,000 from the Government. And did that help? We quote from a survey made by a daily newspaper, the circulation of which is national and international, that "things are looking up among the farmers of the South; things are better than for three or four years past, according to word from some states. The farmers' morale is far higher, merchants are doing a bigger business, taxes and debts are being paid, bank deposits are increasing, and these layers of improvement are attributed to the $110,000,000 sent into the South by the Agricultural Adjustment Administration in its cotton plow-up campaign." The reduction of cotton acreage also "had the hoped-for effect of boosting prices, and that helped enormously, more, say some, than the cotton cash. Evidently the rise in cotton and other farm prices is putting more money into the farmers' hands than the funds the Government sent in to them."

The above is not quoted from an editorial taken from a newspaper partisan to the Administration, attempting to present a rosy outlook, but from the news columns of the Christian Science Monitor of December 27, a newspaper which supported Herbert Hoover.

And here are other quotations, from Southern bankers and business men, in the same news article:

"Several bankers in Texas declare that debts seven and eight years old have been paid in full out of these government funds."

"Trade has improved 100 per cent; and deposits in banks are greater than at any time within the past three or four years," says the director of the South Carolina Agricultural College who further says: "The reverse of the State has reached the point where leaders are suggesting that salaries and appropriations generally for State purposes be increased at the meeting of Legislature in January."

This from North Carolina: "Our farmers are paying large back taxes and indebtedness and are purchasing clothing and other needs ahead of the same period in any year since 1929." And, listen to this, from the same State:

"This is not all due to cotton in this State. Although cotton has been a very material factor, it happens to be the largest producer of flue-cured tobacco of any state in the union. As a result of the program of the Department of Agriculture, tobacco growers are receiving approximately 50 per cent higher prices for their tobacco than was being received when the markets first opened."

From Louisiana: "The AAA program has been directly responsible for an increase of at least $40,000,000 over prices paid for farm products in 1932."

From Arkansas: "We have figured up the cotton crop this fall will bring a return of approximately $70,000,000 to the farmers of the State, where last year it brought about $40,000,000."

From Alabama: "It is conservatively estimated that the volume of purchases made by farm people in Alabama is 25 per cent greater than last fall. More debts, taxes are being paid."

From Mississippi: "Cotton at 10 cents a pound instead of 6, as of 12 months ago, will enable us to liquidate old debts, pay back taxes and have something for 1934 production purposes."

The above are statements of fact, not theory. They tell the story of crop reduction in the South. There cotton was plowed under; here our growers of tobacco are asked to pledge themselves to reduce acreage and the Government pledges itself to pay money rent for the tobacco land thus left idle. It is much the same thing after all.

Still we refrain from "advising" the much-bedeviled farmer. If he has had the patience to read this lengthy editorial, he will, we think, be able to decide for himself whether he will or will not sign the acreage reduction contract.

Splendid Service To His Constituents.

Writing us recently, Hon. Fred M. Vinson—who more than any other man, probably, is responsible for the parity price of Burley tobacco being raised under the Government's agricultural recovery measure—says:

"I understand that the sign-up is coming along nicely. I believe that the tobacco grower will receive material benefit in signing up. My Christmas is happier due to the knowledge that I have helped to bring this about."

Mr. Vinson discovered that the period selected upon which to base the parity price of Burley comprised years during which the lowest of prices were paid. He secured an amendment the effect of which was to base the parity price on more normal years.

When the full effect of the present effort of the Government to increase the price of Burley tobacco shall have been realized, Mr. Vinson's alertness in his behalf will be more deeply appreciated by every Kentuckian who grows tobacco.

Brainard Platt.

Members of the Lancaster Bar are genuinely grieved by the death of Brainard Platt, of the Courier-Journal staff. He was a real newspaper man—and to a newspaper man such designation is a mark of honor. Though highly successful as a member of the staff of a metropolitan newspaper, he, so to speak, never "forsaken the editorship." His popularity among country newspaper men was attested by their having honored him with election to the Executive Committee of the Kentucky Press Association.

God rest his soul in peace.

Toward The Day Of True Democracy.

Facing 1934, the most pessimistic must admit that we have travelled far since the dark days of last March, when, with every bank closed and the Nation confronting financial chaos, action began and this country came to realize that the Roosevelt pledge of a New Deal was no idle slogan. We have gone far, yet we have to go far. As a writer in the Saint Louis Post-Dispatch aptly says: "The remaking of the United States is a true labor of Hercules."

It seems to us that for the first time in our memory a genuine concept of true democracy is held by those in high places. That theory of government, which boldly stated that prosperity could come to the masses only through the bringing of prosperity first to the rich, had furnished bitter proof in the last four years of its emptiness.

We are embarked upon the greatest experiment in the history of a government, long regarded by eminent historians as an experiment in self-government. We have far to go, but we have made the start and this newspaper believes we will go forward toward the day when there shall be no want and misery in the midst of plenty; when the sonorous sentences and noble phrases theories of our Declaration of Independence shall be no longer fine sentences and noble theories; to the day when prosperity means something to all men and not to a favored few; to a day of social justice.

"A political entity, which is primarily maintained for the benefit of the great industrialists," says a magnificently thoughtful editorial in the Saint Louis Post-Dispatch, "and is preyed upon by what Mr. Roosevelt calls the money changers cannot survive. . . . We must have a balanced economy in which there is a greater diffusion of wealth among all the people. Our forefathers could get along in those parts the seats of the mighty resulted from a steady drift toward great wealth for the few and poverty for the many.

"Toward this balanced economy our President is striving. There will be mistakes, no doubt, and obstacles seemingly insurmountable to overcome. These will be tened upon underpaid labor, sweatshop labor, child labor will not see their enormous profits cut to the quick. Nor will they see per cent that in 1929 held 60 per cent of this country's wealth will fight for a return of the old order. Prosperity was brought to the masses through from the top to the rank and file. Their ranks will be augmented by disgruntled and hungry millions. This will do everything in their power to discredit, to make it appear that the rights of property are endangered toward true democracy has been made, but the fight is not won.

The Mercury, aside from every consideration of politics, has supreme confidence in the loyalty and common sense of the President. We, for one, are not expecting perfection in this new order in less mondate time or in less years perhaps; we remember how the first automobile looked; we know how these sleek, streamlined vehicles look now. We can wait, secure in our confidence that the true democracy and common sense of another Lincoln is now guiding and will guide this Nation to a fulfillment of the visions of its founders.

Their Bi-annual Fling.

Now, as our legislators wing in for the bi-annual swarming at Frankfort, we are reminded of a tale which, heretofore voiced in these columns, that one session of a Kentucky Legislature might be held, as which no new law would be passed, but old laws repealed. The consummation of which wish is as improbable as the arrival of the millennium next Thursday morning.

We shall, no doubt, have the usual session except for the factional battle-royal that is forecast. There will be the usual adjournments and goldbricking during the month of January and for the greater part of February perhaps, and then will go scurrying home to their farms and small town life—and some from the enforced virtues of a more or less blissful domesticity perchance—and come back with her winds and promise of golden daffodils, they will adjourn and go home and the public will breath a sigh of relief.

Yet think not that our Legislature is a whit different from any other swarming of the duly elected representatives of the people. They are all alike, from Maine to California. And who so pervish as to begrudge our one hundred and thirty-eight good fellows their biennial fling?

"Pikers."

The editor of the Stanford Interior-Journal and the editor of the Danville Advocate were betting last week their respective newspapers, plus a suit of underwear, upon the result of the race for Speaker in the Kentucky Senate.

Knowing pretty well the value of a country newspaper property in Kentucky in these pinching times, one wonders why such estimable Kentuckians make such "piker" bets.

AN EDITOR'S RANDOM THOUGHTS

Do you remember "rain-aprons," that in fair weather were kept under the seat of the buggy? If you do, my friend, you are at least "of age." Remember, on a rainy night, after listening to a talking picture show skeptical we should have been in rain-apron days of such a contraption as a car that purred smoothly along over hard-surfaced roads, announce on the back seat said: "That's a little too much air for me." The wife would pass down two inches. And straightway I thought of rain aprons, that slipped over the dashboard; of the slit that the buggy passed through and the square apron that was put through which one peeped. And did we put up the rain aprons to keep the boy from our faces? As I remember, we did not, but drove with the zero air on our cheeks, though muffled and bayarred, with straw in the buggy bed and a hot soapstone, to keep us from thinking, as is the want of those who are zero-and-buggy days, more and more frequently, "I remember when—that is the phrase of sturdy fellows in the old zero-and-buggy days, a-riding with the "windshield" open in zero weather. And I felt quite proud and humbled when I was invited to ride in the "open" car.

Yet only for a moment. For think how our young men and women dart hither and yon through air and water and over roads at breakneck speed; and how they dance and pet all night and dodge flivvers and are prosperous and happy and Republican and how the farmer gettin serenely face the zero air with legs bare or near bare and some three ounces of body covering, albeit they "freeze" in office buildings, at 68 degrees Fahrenheit. Not so hardy in the rain-apron days after all.

O, tempora! O, mores! But I think it is mostly sunspots.

Rope Thrown A Drowning Man

(Richmond Register)

Unless tobacco growers sign the production control contract of the government and receive the benefits offered, the continued year after year over-production of burley will make the crop so unprofitable that farmers will eventually have to cut it out and get no benefits for doing so, is the way a nationally prominent farm authority put it when he urged the association faced by burley tobacco raisers.

The facts are unassailable. Year after year total production of burley tobacco has exceeded the demand. More burley has been grown than can be consumed. As that surplus accumulates it depresses the price and has to beat down the price which farmers receive for the product. If this condition continues, unregulated, it will not be long until the price of burley tobacco will be so low that it will force farmers to cut out the crop.

The federal government proposes to buy a processing tax on tobacco which will be collected from tobacco manufacturers. That money will be distributed among tobacco growers who comply with the plan for cutting down tobacco production. Farmers are offered a plan by which they may correct the condition of over-production, be compensated for their cooperation and receive for their chief money crop be stabilized. It is the most favorable proposition which has been offered tobacco growers, the most advantageous plan conceived to prevent the financial disaster which stares them in the face.

It is impossible to conceive of a man so foolish that if he were drowning he would refuse to grasp the rope thrown to him which would make possible his rescue.

From Other Editorial Pages

SECURITY UNDER THE PROFIT SYSTEM

(Excerpts from an address by George N. Peek before American Farm Bureau Federation.)

All through this land there is confident discussion of the so-called new relationship between government of government plans for this or that, of what will happen if this or that is done. What is government? . . . Not some mysterious device handed down from heaven to be worship from below. It is of our own making . . . The Federal Government was supposed to intervene only in such matters as individuals or states could not do themselves. The foundation of the whole structure from the first was the right to protect property rights, and the sacredness of contracts.

There is great apprehension in the minds of many business men today about the relation of government to business. There is grave concern over the expansion of a few ultra-liberals about the Government taking over private business. If you want my opinion—personally, not officially, mind you—I would say that this expansion is unwarranted. When it hustles, the Government has more to do, and more that it will get up before it wakes.

Legislative profits have always been regarded in this country as a proper reward for individual initiative, thrift, and skill. I know no substitute for such traits. I am in favor of the profit system. But I am in favor of starting with the farmer.

There is abroad in the land a propaganda of more or less import, aims for doing away with the profit system. This movement is not less than doing away with the initiative and energy which we have grown up and prospered more or less. It aims at the racketeers in finance as much as I am against the racketeers in the underworld. But we have to deal with destroying institutions. It lies in reaching these racketeers in high places under the farm and small town life—and some from the enforced virtues of a more or less blissful domesticity perchance—and come back with her winds and promise of golden daffodils, they will adjourn and go home and the public will breath a sigh of relief.

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FIFTY YEARS AGO

Thursday, January 2, 1884

Died—Mrs. Mary E. Thomas, 20, at her home near Freedmore.

Willie Saunders, secretary of Christian Union Sunday school, reports 200 enrolled.

"Our efficient estimator, Mr. Henry Pritts, has put in twenty-three handsome new lock boxes."

Ratliff & Hamm take charge of Kimbrough House first of year and Sam Howe, Jr., will be clerk.

Martin & Scobee, local stockdealers, shipped $60,000 worth of cattle and hogs during past twelve months.

Crockett Taylor and wife open restaurant and toy store in room formerly occupied by Mrs. McAdam.

Sol Robertson has bought out the interest of Lee Beauchamp and John Robinson and he and R. M. Parks will continue the coal, tobacco and commission business.

Born—To Mr. and Mrs. Henry Sooby, of Nicodemus, a daughter.—To Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Pryan, near Dale, on December 26th, a daughter.—To Mr. and Mrs. Nevi Alexander, of East Union, a son.

"The telephone line between Maysville and Mt. Olivet will soon be completed, and then the Sharpsburg and Carlisle line will connect with it by the Carlisle and Blue Licks line."

Married—Miss Pelitha Wagoner and Mr. O. W. Castleman, Mr. Mary E. Edwards and Hiram Hodges—Miss Linda Wagoner and Mr. George W. Mitchelltree—Miss Phoebe E. Shoemaker and Mr. Ben Jason Jackwell—Miss Paulina C. Shoemaker and Mr. J. N. Pryman.

"Dougherty Lodge No. 6, F. & A. M. elects following officers on December 27th: Jas. Wallace, W. M.; Geo. Glenn, S. W.; Hanson Kennedy, J. W.; W. W. Chalfant, treasurer; J. H. Campbell, secretary; John T. Sims, S. D.; James Ward, J. D.; J. C. Crump, stewards; Moses Betters, tyler; R. B. Chenault, chaplain.

"Men end in sharp, stiff points that serve as props. The reason that you never see a switch at rest is because it only adjusts to the track, when a chimney or hollow tree. I never tire of watching it, for it twists and turns as though trying to go through a series of zigzag action. Sometimes it looks as though the birds were playing a game of tag. And the elastic never ceases for a moment.

"The switts usually nest in small numbers in unused chimneys in occupied houses. The material is small twigs which are snapped off dead limbs in flight. They are glued to the rough wall by a sticky substance secreted in their mouths