

AMERICAN FARMERS' AND RURAL ORGANIZATIONS

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AMERICAN
FARMERS' AND RURAL
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BY DAVID E. LINDSTROM

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FOREWORD

Few textbooks or books for supplementary reading are available on the subject of Farmers' and Rural Organizations, though several good books were written on farmers' movements and agricultural organizations in the United States in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth. Records of these organizations and movements have not been brought up through the second and third decades for effective classroom and local leader use. The author hopes, therefore, that the present work will serve to review previous works and bring the records up-to-date, and to round out such records by references to the present-day works on organizations in which farm people participate.

The forms and functions of organizations in which farm people take part—farmer's clubs, farm bureau units, granges, farmer's union locals, rural community clubs, and other organizations in which they find a freedom of expression different from that found in other groups—are of real concern. The more one works with these organizations the more one is brought to feel their importance in building attitudes, shaping forms of social organization, and affecting the lives of farm people. Then, too, the county, state, and national branches of some of these organizations unquestionably have had considerable influence on local, state and national agricultural policies. Contact with these groups impresses one with the opportunities open to farm people through them to secure social, educational, and economic benefits not otherwise open to rural people.

The present work has been organized for use into five parts: Part I, The Field of Farmers' and Rural Organizations; Part II, Historical Backgrounds; Part III, Present-Day Farmers' Organizations; Part IV, Comparative Structures, Functions and Processes; and Part V, National Policies, Rural Values and Human Welfare. Selected readings and questions to encourage further study are listed at the end of each chapter. Although this material is intended for a first course in colleges, it can also be used in

advanced classes in high schools. The list of questions at the end of each chapter are therefore divided into two sections: one for the use of high school classes and one for classes in college. Leaders of farmers' and rural organizations will, it is anticipated, find this book of use for general reading and for constant reference and for use in adult educational classes or study groups.

The author wishes to acknowledge with thanks the work of H. C. Taylor, Director, Farm Foundation; B. H. Hibbard, Professor Emeritus, University of Wisconsin; Charles L. Stewart, Professor of Land Economics, University of Illinois; J. H. Kolb, Head, Department of Rural Sociology, University of Wisconsin, Mrs. Kathryn Van Aken Burns, State Leader of Home Advisers, University of Illinois Extension Service in Agriculture and Home Economics, for reading parts of the manuscript. Thanks are also due to the following farmers' organization leaders for reading certain parts of the manuscript and for furnishing valuable material: R. B. Corbett, Mrs. Charles W. Sewell, and V. V. Vaniman of the American Farm Bureau Federation; James Patton, Ed Wertz, and Robert Handschin of the National Farmers' Educational and Cooperative Union; E. A. Goss and Howard A. Caton of the National Grange; John H. Davis of the National Council of Farmers' Cooperatives; LeRoy Melton, Farmers' Equity Union, Raymond Miller of the American Institute of Cooperation and Mrs. L. J. Killey, National Home Demonstration Council.

The author is especially grateful to his wife for her constant help and inspiration in the preparation of this work; and to H. M. Haulin, Professor of Agricultural Education, University of Illinois for editing the manuscript.

DAVID EDGAR LINDSTROM.

FOREWORD

A college professor was recently quoted as saying, "You and I were born individuals; we live our individual lives; and we die as individuals. Everything we do is individualistic." It would be hard to make a statement farther from the truth. The facts are that we are born into groups; that groups have an important part in shaping our personalities, our very "selves"; and nothing that we do is without social motivations or social effects.

We have tended too much to think of farmers as individuals living autonomous lives on their own quarter-sections. They never were mere individuals. Cooperative action among our pioneer farmers was quite as common as it is today though cooperation took forms which have now largely disappeared.

Rural life without rural organizations would be rugged and primitive. Rural civilization is largely a product of rural organizations and institutions. We cannot understand an individual farmer without understanding the organizations that affect him.

Rural organizations of many kinds have grown up among us almost unnoticed. Their number and complexity become apparent as we read Dr. Lindstrom's systematic presentation of them. They are highly significant not only in rural life but in the life of the nation.

It is of the greatest importance not only that we know about these organizations, but that we become constructively critical of them. We may not assume that all they do is wise and good. Farm people must learn to participate intelligently in them and to influence their leadership and policies.

Farmers are a minority group in the United States and they must organize to protect themselves and to influence public opinion. An adverse public can make the lot of the farmers very hard. Farmers must recognize that they are a minority group and must learn to operate effectively as a minority.

Though they are a minority in the population, farmers are as yet a powerful minority with an influence upon national and world affairs out of proportion to their numbers. They still retain some

of the prerogatives they had when they constituted a much larger part of the population. One of the best examples is their influence in the Senate of the United States. Because we provided at the beginning of our national life for two senators for each state, the agricultural states are still able to control that powerful body. Their control is of especial significance because the Senate helps to determine the foreign policy of the country. Legislators are, in turn, much influenced by organizations, so that farmers' organizations have a powerful role in determining our relations with other countries. Considering the present state of our foreign relations, the rural people have a grave responsibility for determining through their organizations whether we shall have imperialism or good neighborliness, one world, or many worlds, war or peace.

Dr. Lindstrom's book should be of help in understanding the rural organizations we have and how and why they have developed. Farm people need the background it provides as they attempt to learn how to participate effectively in their organizations and how to make their organizations serve their own and the public's interests.

H. M. HAMLIN.

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PART I

The Field of Farmers' and Rural Organizations— An Introduction

An understanding of the work and contributions of farmers' and rural organizations must begin with an analysis of the social and economic forces affecting them, for these forces have a significant effect on the success of these organizations, not only in the state and nation, but in the county and community as well. Before launching into an analysis of the organizations themselves, moreover, we should know what is to be included in our study—to define what is meant by farmers' and rural organizations—for farmers are affected, directly and indirectly, by many forms of organizations. Finally, we should recognize that the area in which the direct impact on the farmer is made is in the neighborhood and community, so we should analyze the kinds of organizations in which farmers take part if we are to make an adequate study of them.

CHAPTER I

FORCES AFFECTING FARMERS' AND RURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Farm people always have been influenced by social forces in a different manner than have other people. Because they live in a different environment, their reactions are colored by that environment, even in days of rapid communication.

Expanding Social Contacts

There was a time in the development of agriculture in the United States when the farm family made most of its social contacts in an area encompassed by a half-day ride with horse and buggy. In those times the church, the trade center, the neighborhood, and the area in which people were of the same nationality operated coincidentally to contribute to a social solidarity which, seemingly, has been considered weakened by the development of modern means of communication.¹

Home Versus Outside Contacts

Most of the time of the average farmer—that is, the man whose full-time occupation is farming—is spent at home within the line fences of the farm he operates.² During the time that the farmer spends at home, his contacts are with growing things—not only with crops, livestock, but also with his family—and he occasionally visits with his kinfolks and neighbors. During the small per cent of the time that the farmer spends off the farm (probably less than ten per cent), he trades, visits, attends school, church, or lodge affairs, and takes part in organizational activities or in individual and family recreation and amusement.

¹ J. H. Kolb, "Rural Primary Groups," Res. Bul. 51. Madison: Agr. Exp. Sta., Uni. of Wisconsin, December, 1921. See also "Trends of Country Neighborhoods," Res. Bul. 120, and "Neighborhood-Community Relationships in Rural Society," Res. Bul. 154, 1944.

² D. E. Lindstrom, "Forces Affecting Participation of Farm People in Rural Organizations," Bul. 423. Urbana: Uni. of Illinois Agr. Exp. Sta., 1936.

Influences of Modern Communication

The feeling of individual independence on the part of the average farmer has been accentuated by improved means of communication. Freedom of choice in the form of opportunities to trade for one thing in one center and for another in a more distant center, to attend church in still another center, and to send the children to school in several centers, depending on the grade attained, is characteristic of modern farm life in the United States. Consequently, a number of farm families in every community have no real common center of interest except farm work and family life.

Effects of Freedom of Choice

Although the economic nature of farming tends to keep the family intact as a group, interest group activities give individual members an escape from social groups which formerly by force of circumstances in the restricted locality commanded the participation or interest of most of the members of the family. Except for the fact that children of a certain age must go to school, the farm person can decide for himself whether or not he will join a particular group. Consequently, the process of socialization—the development of a “we feeling” which tends to make people grow in capacity and will to act together—operates on a different basis than it did in the horse and buggy days. Farmers no longer have to trade in the same center, worship in the nearby church, or perform other social functions in unity.

New Group Alignments

Different social forces are influencing farm people to make new and different group affiliations. Domination in the form of church authority is no longer so apparent. The conflict of church denominations in the same community has caused many to lose interest in the church and to seek other social contacts. The chances for the town merchant to exploit the farmer have become minimized in the modern rural community where rapid and easy travel makes it possible for the farmer to go to the larger town or city.

Cooperation between the farmer and the townsman is doubtlessly needed now more than formerly. Formerly the merchant

may have overemphasized the profit motive, may have left the farmer out of his social class by forming exclusive town organizations, but yet retained his trade; now, however, the farmer has swung away from a desire for common group effort with the townsman in the development of his own organizations. He has come to feel that he does not need the help of the town group. Indeed, some farmers have come to feel so self-sufficient that they see no necessity for working even with their fellow farmers. The result is a spirit of independence which, in some cases, grows into competition bordering on hostility, especially in areas where local group activities are sparse.

Development of Class Consciousness

General farmers' organizations and farmers' economic cooperatives have been formed more rapidly throughout the world in the last few decades than in any previous period.³ Most of these organizations are strictly voluntary in nature, although legal action has been used in some countries to secure compulsory cooperation.⁴ The tendency of farm people to work together to an increasing extent has been in operation much longer in Europe than in the New World.

The extent to which farm people will form groups for their mutual benefit and protection in the future remains to be seen, but the development so far does point to the fact that "farmers are awakening to the fact that certain aspects of the economic (and social) system are contrary to their interests."⁵

Changes in the Social Environment

The environment in which rural groups have been found to function has proceeded from the nomadic form of agriculture, to the village which formed the center of social activities, and finally

³"Yearbook of Agricultural Cooperation, 1938." London: Cooperative Wholesale Society Ltd., Preface. See also the 1946 Year-Book.

⁴E. A. Stockdyke, "Economic and Legal Aspects of Compulsory Production in Agricultural Marketing," Bulletin 565. Berkeley: California Agricultural Experiment Station, 1933.

⁵J. M. Williams, "The Expansion of Rural Life." New York: Knopf, 1925, page 316.

to the scattered farmstead type of settlement which characterized the spread westward by early settlers in the United States.⁶ The abandonment of the village by settlers who occupied farms separated one from the other, both in Europe and America, wrought profound changes in the system of social organization among rural people. Groups in the concentrated village habitat⁷ of Central Europe were formed by kinship, custom, magic, or coercion. In contrast, the scattered farmstead community in which farm people in America live today provides a background for group-making forces which are largely socio-economic in nature. Certainly it requires a different organizational approach than is called for in one in which the farmers live in the village.⁸

Groups Resulting from Voluntary Action

The simplest form of group resulting from voluntary action is one for mutual aid.⁹ The practice of exchanging work is still quite common among American farmers. Such an exchange has often led to the formation of threshing rings, spraying rings, or other forms for use of the more expensive types of machinery. Road improvements, the erection of community buildings, cooperative purchasing, entertainments, harvest festivals, husking bees, and music, drama, and literary functions have been quite common. Many of these groups have displayed no evidence of formal organization but are formed merely by a "local consciousness of unity and the existence of a group name."¹⁰ Topography and original vegetation, nationality bonds, religious purposes, the migration from a common place of residence, and economic and social pur-

⁶ Dwight Sanderson, "The Rural Community." Boston: Ginn & Co., 1932. See also D. E. Lindstrom, "American Rural Life." New York: The Ronald Press, Inc., 1948.

⁷ Pitirim Sorokin, Carl C. Zimmerman, and C. J. Galpin, "Systematic Source Book in Rural Sociology." Minneapolis: The Uni. of Minn. Press, 1930, Vol. I, Chapter IX.

⁸ Lindstrom, "American Rural Life." *Op. cit.*, page 5.

⁹ E. A. Ross, "Outlines of Sociology." New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1924, pages 245 and 395.

¹⁰ J. H. Kolb, "Rural Primary Groups," Res. Bul. 51. Madison: Uni. of Wis. Agr. Exp. Sta., 1921, concluding chapter.

poses brought them into being. These groups characterize the earlier life in rural America.

Later, groups formed around special interest.¹¹ Parent-teacher associations, farmers' clubs, community organizations, cooperative creameries, and similar groups functioned about some sort of structure or organizational setup, had officers, membership requirements, regular meetings with more or less carefully-planned programs, and had formal constitutions and by-laws.

Complexity of Rural Group Life

At one time the rural community could be said to be composed of farm people forming themselves into groups for one or more common purposes. The present-day scattered-farmstead rural community with a village center "represents a melting pot of various and quite different occupational groups."¹² The typical village itself has five or six churches, about a dozen and a half church organizations, six or eight lodges, several civic organizations, more than two dozen social organizations, and from eight to ten economic organizations. Each village averages 21 village organizations and 16 church organizations or altogether 37 different organizations per village.¹³ The most recent tendency seems to be not only a continued interest in village social group organizations but also an increase in organizations "designed particularly for country people located in open-country areas of the village communities, like the Farm Bureau, Grange and Farmer's Union."¹⁴ Furthermore, county-wide organizations have developed and are developing—for example, the county unit of the farm bureau, the grange, the county unit of the home bureau, the dairyman's league, county cooperative marketing associations, and others.¹⁵

¹¹ See J. H. Kolb and Edmund deS. Brunner, "A Study of Rural Society." Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, Third Edition, 1946, page 331.

¹² Sorokin, Zimmerman and Galpin, *op. cit.*, page 324.

¹³ David Jenkins, "Growth and Decline of Agricultural Villages." New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1940.

¹⁴ J. H. Kolb and Edmund deS. Brunner, "Rural Social Trends." New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1933, page 250.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, page 265.

The Spread of Urban Influences

The city always has had an attraction for rural people and particularly for the youth of the country. Therefore, many "urbanisms" have gained a hold on the rural people and have made significant changes in rural group life.¹⁶

1. The decreasing size of farm families is probably the most significant evidence of the influence of urban on rural life. The farm family which has "caught" the city philosophy that children are an economic liability¹⁷ is likely to be small—that is, with only one or two children. This philosophy is closely related to the development of the commercialized way of life; mechanization, which has many values, has made large families on the farm unnecessary for a labor supply. Smaller families, in turn, mean changes in the participation in rural organizations and in the kinds of organizations formed.

2. The increasing use of modern utilities—radio, telephone, automobile, and electric power—place services, at one time supplied by social organization, at the beck and call of every farm family. Yet, farmers are not as self-sufficient as they were at one time; they, with their city cousins, live in a derivative economy.

3. The superficiality, anonymity, and fickle loyalties of urban people have permeated rural life and have affected types and forms of rural organizations. Relations between people have become more formal; every man is led to "look out for himself"—a characteristic of urban life. Freedom from tradition has developed a form of irresponsibility in city life which has found its way into rural life, and with this irresponsibility has come a lack of interest characterized by a "let-George-do-it" attitude instead of a willingness to take time to see the thing as the other fellow sees it.

The Outreaching of Government

New forms of governmental aid to agriculture have brought not only local forms but also state and federal forms of governmental

¹⁶ D. E. Lindstrom, "Rural Life and the Church." Champaign, Illinois: Garrard Press, 1946, page 32.

¹⁷ O. E. Baker, Ralph Borsodi, and M. L. Wilson, "Agriculture in Modern Life." New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1939, page 126.

service to the very threshold of every farm family. Today the farmer is touched by and is working with governmental agencies as he has never done before. The forms of organization and service have become complex, in fact so much so that agents of various forms of governmental service in a county are forced to form councils or "clearing houses" to avoid conflict with each other in contacting and serving farm people:

1. A movement initiated in 1939 took the form of a national program which was sponsored by the Extension Service in cooperation with other agencies of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, called the Land-Use Planning Program.¹⁸ In this program, community, county, and state land-use committees were set up to plan for a more effective use of county, state, and federal agricultural agencies.

2. With the on-coming of the National Defense and War programs of 1940-45, other agricultural councils have been formed, notably (1) the Food-for-Defense committees organized through the Extension Service on a county, state and national basis; and (2) the USDA Defense Councils, headed by the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, but taking in all the educational and action agencies of the county. When war was declared County War Boards developed out of these groups.

3. The coming of peace ushered in a change in the name and something of the functions of these councils or boards, but they have been far less prominent or active since the close of the war.

The rise and development of governmental forms of agricultural organization will receive more detailed treatment in later chapters. A significant fact in connection with them is that voluntary action on the part of farmers has been supplemented with a wide variety of governmental programs, especially in the war period. There are those who feel that the voluntary group action by farmers may be submerged or made unnecessary by reason of the work of these governmental agencies. Thus governmentally sponsored educational and action agencies may virtually take the place of the

¹⁸ "Land-Use Planning Under Way." Washington, D. C.: U. S. D. A., July, 1941.

voluntary educational and action groups, both in making agricultural policies and in their administration. Many farm leaders feel, however, that such a development would stultify democratic processes and lead to an undesirable form of centralized governmental control over agriculture and rural life.

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are some of the modern means of communication which have helped to weaken the social solidarity of the early close-knit country neighborhood?
2. What changes in farming or homemaking operations affect the manner in which a farmer or members of his family spend their time on the farm or in the home?
3. What are some of the most important outside contacts made by modern farmers?
4. What are the chief factors which make farmers feel independent of their neighbors?
5. What are the major urban influences affecting rural life? Which are constructive and why are they? Which are destructive of the best kind of rural life? Why?
6. What specific governmental activities are operative to serve the interests of farmers? In what ways do they cooperate and in what ways are they in conflict?

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Note the evidences of neighborhood or primary group life in your or a typical rural community; is it growing more or less important in the life of the people? Why? (See reports of the studies of primary groups in Kolb and Brunner, "A Study of Rural Society.")
2. Make your own conclusions as to the effects of greater freedom of choice on the social solidarity of farmers. (See Lindstrom, "American Rural Life," Chapter I.)
3. What kinds of cooperation seem to be developing in the area of farm life you know best? (Check with findings in Williams, "The Expansion of Rural Life," Page 316 ff.)
4. Compare the village and scattered-farmstead forms of settlement as environments in which groups of farm people may form. (Read Sanderson, "The Rural Community," Chapter I.)
5. Describe ways in which town and country in rural life are becoming more integrated; are growing further apart. (Use Landis, "Rural Life in Process," Chapter I, to help in your analysis.)
6. Discuss why Baker thinks city life is deteriorating and what he finds in rural life that is helping to retard the process. (Read from Baker, Borsodi, and Wilson, "Agriculture in Modern Life," Chapters VIII-X.)
7. Discuss the new forms of government service operating in your or a typical rural community. (See Lindstrom, pages 32 to 52, and Kolb and Brunner, Chapters 10 and 25.)

EXERCISE

Briefly analyze the community from which you come (or select one on which a complete social analysis has been made): What forms of modern communication has it? What is the type of farming carried on in the area and what influence does it have on the time the people have for organizations? Tell what you know about the organizations in which farm people take part. In what ways are the farm people urbanized? What are their most significant rural traits?

CHAPTER II

DEFINITION OF FARMERS' AND RURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Farmers' Organizations

The popular conception of a farmers' organization is that it is an organization national in scope which is made up of farmers. Yet a farmers' organization can be local; it can operate on a county-wide basis; or it can be national or even international in scope. Some farmers' organizations are local groups which provide for social and educational benefits for the members in the locality; others are non-localized and provide only for economic interests. There are a wide variety of farmers' organizations. Not all farmers participate in them; nor are all farmers' organizations limited to farmers.

There is some question as to whether governmentally-sponsored organizations in which farmers take part can be called farmers' organizations; yet if a complete picture is to be presented of all or most of the organizations in which farmers participate these types of groups must be included in our study. Even though, moreover, not all organizations in which farmers take part can be called farmers' organizations, yet the ones in which they do take part are important. Therefore we must include a study of all rural organizations in which farmers participate if our study is to give a true picture of the organizational situation affecting farmers.

Rural Organizations Defined

The term "rural organizations" includes a host of groups that are active in rural areas; therefore, the term must be defined in order to understand what rural organizations do and can do to advance agriculture and rural life. The plural form of the term is used in the present work (1) to make clear that the main emphasis of our discussion is upon various forms of organizations and not upon a social process and (2) to carry the student into an examination of forms which function not only on the rural community basis but also on a county, state, and national basis.

Some confusion can exist as to the meaning of each of the two words "rural" and "organization." The terms may have a narrow meaning: "Rural" may refer to "open-country" for some; "organization" may be taken to mean only a particular group with a special type of setup. The terms may have a broad meaning: "Rural" may refer to all the people residing outside of towns of more than 2,500 population for some; "organization" may be taken to describe any organic arrangement in nature. Hence, a discussion of the meanings of these terms is essential as a basis for our study of rural organizations.

1. "RURAL" DEFINED. Probably the most popular definition of "rural"—the sense in which rural people themselves best understand it—is "pertaining to the country as distinguished from the city or the town; characteristic of, suited to, or living in the country; pertaining to farming or agriculture." J. M. Gillette says, "The term originated in the old latin word 'ruralis' which in turn was derived from the Latin word 'rus,' meaning country. 'Thus,' he states, "we observe that the primary and original meaning of rural was agriculture and agricultural. But rural life as a fact was old when the word 'rural' was formed and the origin of the term throws new light on the beginning of rural society. To think straight on this point, we must keep before us the idea that the essential and central idea in rural is farming, agricultural production."¹

Such a definition gives the central idea, but it cannot be used effectively when a differentiation between rural and urban is attempted. Rural life is becoming increasingly complex. Farmers live in villages, towns, or even cities, and nonagricultural people live in the open-country and are only rural in that they live or have their residence there. The farmer in the city may have all of his interests in farming and farm life, yet not live in the country; and the city man in the country may be no more a part of the environment in which he lives than is his fellow office—or factory-worker who lives in a city flat far from all forms of farm life.

¹ J. M. Gillette, "Rural Sociology." New York: The Macmillan Company, 1936, page 13.

These situations cannot be considered, however, if a count is to be made of all those who live in rural areas as is done by the United States Census. Therefore, it is important to know just how the line is drawn for Census purposes. The Census defines the urban population as those residing in cities and other incorporated places with 2,500 inhabitants or more² and defines the remainder as rural population. The farm population is regarded as all those who live on farms, exclusive of occupation. This classification must be used to get the count; and, for all practical purposes, such a definition is satisfactory. It does not consider, however, that those who live in towns and villages in or near some other industry, such as mining, and who are dependent upon it cannot be looked upon as rural, especially if the idea of farming is kept central in the definition.

a. *The Expanded Definition of "Rural."* The most inclusive definition of "rural" is the one which includes many occupations besides farming, and many classes of people besides farmers. It includes many thousands of individuals who live in the country but who work in the town or city. It includes a constant daily flow of population between city and country. But if such a definition is applied too liberally, it loses the essence of rural: that one thing is rural and the other urban. When students use such a definition, they must look upon the difference between rural and urban as a difference in degree of urban-ness and rural-ness.

"Rural and urban do not exist of themselves in a vacuum, as it were, but the principal characteristics of each may be found shading into, blending, or mixing with the essential characteristics of the other. Thousands of crossroads corners have grown into hamlets, villages, towns, and some even into cities. All these categories shade into one another by almost imperceptible degrees, and this is equally true whether the question be regarded from the

²Except in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island where "towns (townships) are classified as urban if they have more than 2,500 inhabitants and certain urban characteristics." Paul H. Landis, "Rural Life in Process." New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1940, page 17, footnote 1.

historical or the cross-sectional point of view. Rather than consisting of mutually exclusive categories, rural and urban, the general society seems to resemble a spectrum in which the most remote backwoods, subrural settlements blend imperceptibly into the rural and then gradually through all degrees of rural and suburban into the most urban and hyper-urban ways of living."³

b. *Characteristics of Rural.*⁴ (1) Farming is the chief symbol of rural life. Farm life includes dealing with living, growing things—plants and animals. City life is characterized by occupation with mechanical things—things completely under human control.

(2) People in rural areas live "spread out." The "scattered farmstead" type of settlement on the land is traditionally rural, although people in rural villages live in the crowded fashion that is characteristic of cities. Gardens, chickens, and even small numbers of other livestock are found in rural villages, for many retired farmers live in them.

(3) Rural is also characterized by the type of community in which rural people live. The community is small in relation to urban communities and provides many and frequent face-to-face social contacts. The people are more homogeneous; they have more things in common than do city people. Social class cleavages are not so distinct in the rural community as in the city community; the tenant or laboring class, for example, may have as high a social or group standing as the owner class.

(4) Rural areas are characterized, moreover, by a relative lack of population mobility. Rural people do not move as often nor as far when they change from one place of residence or occupation to another as do city people. Social contacts, also, are less fleeting and superficial and are likely to be more with the same persons or groups in rural areas than in urban areas; thus, though there are fewer social contacts they are more permanent or lasting in rural areas.

³ T. L. Smith, "The Sociology of Rural Life." New York: Harpers & Brothers, 1946, page 15.

⁴ See also Lindstrom, "American Rural Life," *op. cit.*, Chapter 2, and Smith, *op. cit.*, pages 16 to 38.

(5) Rural people live at greater distances from each other than do urban people; they are thus likely to enjoy more privacy or to be more isolated. However, they do not suffer the social isolation experienced by many city people; they know each other better. Neighborliness is a characteristic of rural people, although with better means of communication farm people do not visit with one another as formerly, due partly to the trend toward greater self-sufficiency in farm and home management.⁵ Yet neighborliness still persists in rural areas; fortunate are the people in a locality in which neighbors visit frequently, trade work, help out in time of stress, and maintain friendly contact in other ways. Such a locality is carrying on the purest kind of democratic process.

(6) Finally, rural people, especially those who are farmers, are drawn together by the nature of their occupation and environment. They have more of a "consciousness of kind" than have city people, even if modern conditions tend to weaken this bond. It is the bond that has made possible a class feeling and farmer movements of one kind or another. "From the time that Roman slaves revolted against their masters, down to the present, those on the soil have resented what has often been and to them has always appeared to be their systematic exploitation by those in town. And those in town have resented the imputation that they were exploiters, even when the accusation was true. Perhaps the concentration of wealth in cities together with the great decline in agricultural wealth may seem sufficient proof that farmers have been subject to exploitation. At any rate, rightly or wrongly, the agriculturalists in North America, Europe, and Australia (and in many other countries) at the present time are quite generally agreed that the currents of business run against them unduly and that the industrial, financial, and commercial organizations identified with cities are organized and operated to make undue profits at their expense."⁶

The word "rural" then, must be defined in terms of the dominant occupation, the size of the community, the environment, the

⁵ Lindstrom, "American Rural Life," *op. cit.*, Chapter I.

⁶ J. M. Gillette, "Rural Sociology." *Op. cit.*, page 621.

social life, the mobility of the people, and the isolation and cohesion of those who live in rural areas. Rural people are those who are engaged in or dependent upon agriculture, who live in a relatively small community, who work with or close to nature, who have relatively lasting social contacts, who move short distances when they change residence, and who sometimes look upon themselves as a class oppressed or exploited by other classes.

c. *Rural Society: The Human Emphasis.* The people are, after all, the dominant element in rural life, although some institutions, including colleges of agriculture, have given major emphasis to soil, crop, and livestock improvement in the past. The close relation of rural people to nature and to each other are the chief characteristics defining rural society.⁷ Although non-farm people—villages and small-town people—are counted as rural, they do not make up the society that is characteristic of rural people. The farm people give rural people their real distinguishing characteristic. It is therefore the welfare of farm people that is of great concern, for they are not only the producers of basic material wealth—food and fibre—but they are the producers of human wealth, the youth who come to farm and to migrate to the cities.

2. ORGANIZATION DEFINED. The term "organization" may be viewed from the standpoint of (1) the physical or material universe or (2) the human or social. "Organization" may refer to the arrangements of the parts in a whole, as the organization of parts in a machine or the organization of enterprises in a farm business. "Organization" may also refer to the arrangement by which a group of people work, play, or live together. The latter can be distinguished by the term social organization:

a. The arrangement of people on the land so that it may be cultivated in parcels or acreages of various sizes may be said to be a form of organization. The form of settlement may become a separate study in social organization in itself.

⁷O. E. Baker, "Farming as a Life Work." Washington, D. C.: Mimeographed publication by the United States Department of Agriculture, 1938, page 5.

b. Systems of land division are also forms of organization; the American system of 36 sections to a township can be made a study in social organization.

c. Land tenure itself, providing for the arrangement of farm people into farm hands, croppers, tenants, part-owners, and owners, can be called a form of organization.⁸

d. Group arrangements by which people live together in families, neighborhoods, communities, counties, states, and nations may be said to be forms of organization.

These forms of social organization can be defined as "the set, arrangement, or structure of parts or organs by which a society of individuals is prepared for systematic cooperation; the systematic union of individuals in a body whose officers, agents, and members work together for a common end; the act or process of organizing, or the state of being organized."⁹ This definition, when analyzed, emphasizes three aspects: (1) the structure or framework; (2) the function; (3) the process, through which or by which an organization functions. The word, when applied to organization of people, stresses the interaction of individuals. Such a definition limits the use of the word to a description of some phase of human society in which social contact—the physical or mental meeting of individuals—is an essence.

Complexity of Social Organization

When the word "organization" is used in relation to human activity, officers, members, programs, and group activities are usually visualized. But social organization exists without these visible forms. When social organization is looked upon as "the working arrangement whereby people interact in a common universe of attitudes and values,"¹⁰ it becomes very complex and may involve the whole system of organizations and institutions in which an individual may find himself. Community organization, for

⁸ Smith, *op. cit.*, Chapters 10 to 13.

⁹ Webster's Unabridged Dictionary.

¹⁰ E. S. Bogardus, "Contemporary Sociology." Los Angeles: University of Southern California Press, 1931, page 299.

example, may involve "the integration and coordination of whatever agencies do exist (in a community) in order that a consensus of opinion and unity of action on matters of general interest may be secured."¹¹

In a more general way "all minds act together in a vital whole from which the individual is never really separate" and this "unity of the social mind consists not in agreement but in organization, in the fact of reciprocal influence or causation among its parts, by virtue of which everything that takes place in it is connected with everything else, and so is an outcome of the whole."¹²

Social organization may thus be viewed (1) from the human relation point of view, (2) by being looked upon as "formalized modes of acting together," such as in groups with officers, programs, and meetings, or (3) as "positions people occupy with respect to one another, as in the layout of a village or the plot of a farming area, for the village and neighborhood are basically territorial areas embracing in the existing organization all the persons dwelling in them by virtue of their location or position."¹³

Elements in the Definition of Organization

The definition, "An organization is a set of differentiated activities serving a common purpose and so correlated that the effectiveness of each is increased by its relation to the rest,"¹⁴ emphasizes again (1) structure ("set"), (2) function ("serving a common purpose"), and (3) process ("correlated"). The structure refers to the systematic arrangement of officers, committees, or other types of framework; the function refers to what the organization does; and the process has reference to the way in which the purposes are fulfilled or the parts work together in the whole.

¹¹ Dwight Sanderson and R. A. Polson, "Rural Community Organization." New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1939, page 3.

¹² Charles H. Cooley, "Social Organization." New York: Charles Scribners and Sons, 1929, pages 3 and 4.

¹³ N. L. Sims, "Elements of Rural Sociology." New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1940, page 451.

¹⁴ E. C. Hayes, "Introduction to the Study of Sociology." New York: D. Appleton Company, 1915, page 409.

Studying Farmers' and Rural Organizations

Rural organizations, then, are the systems by which the people of a rural society cooperate to secure desired ends. Thus, a study can be made of all forms of rural social groups in which a system or structure, functions, and processes are to be found. Most analyses, especially those by sociologists, have been of the organization for farm and rural people in their local or community settings, and these studies are valuable for they show the manner in which and the extent to which rural people take part in and are affected by various forms of organizations. Organizations operating on the county, state, national and international levels have not had the attention they deserve. The National Grange, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Farmers' Union, and other similar organizations have had a great influence on rural life. They merit careful study, for they have projected themselves effectively into the economic and social life of rural people.

However, farmers' organizations, including economic cooperatives, are only one of several forms of rural organizations which should be studied if the whole story is to be told. Rural homemakers' organizations, rural youth organizations, organizations of or within institutions such as the church or the government, and rural community organizations are all vital to rural life. A study of organizations should include origins, structure, functions, processes, trends, relationships, and effects on rural and urban life. In the present work, chief attention will be given to the farm peoples' or farmers' organizations. They will be examined from the standpoint of origins, the environments in which they act, their structure and functions, the processes involved in their development, the trends they are taking, and their effect on the social and economic life of rural people. As a basis for such a study we will need to appraise the numbers and kinds of organizations in which farm people participate.

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the popular definition of "rural"? How should the word be defined? What are the limitations to this definition?
2. Distinguish between "farm" and "rural."
3. Summarize the characteristics of "rural."
4. What do you mean when you use the word "organization" in describing human association? In what other general ways may the word be used?
5. What are the types of human association which may be described by using the word "organization"?
6. What are the chief elements in the definition of "organization"?
7. Outline what should go into a study of farmers' organizations.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. What is the emphasis given to the definition of social organization by Charles S. Cooley?
2. What does Sanderson include in his definition of rural social organization?
3. Analyze the definitions of "rural"; what are the major emphases given by Gillette, Sims, and Smith?
3. Differentiate between the various forms of organization: Village as described by Sims; systems of land division as analyzed by Smith; com-

munity organization as defined by Sanderson and Polson; interest groups as analyzed by Lindstrom in "American Rural Life."

4. What should you look for in describing the structure and the functions of a rural organization? Lindstrom, "American Rural Life," Chapter 2.
5. Where do farmers' organizations fit into the picture of rural organizations in a community? Sanderson and Polson, Chapter 1.

EXERCISE

Further analyze the community you selected for study in Chapter I from the standpoint of the various forms of organization defined in this chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE ORGANIZATIONS IN A RURAL COMMUNITY

A knowledge of the numbers, kinds, and functions of farmers' and rural organizations that are likely to be found active or represented by membership in a rural community is basic to an understanding of their impact on rural life. Almost every rural community has a church or churches, with their organizations, and a school or schools, with their organizations. Unfortunately, not all rural communities have farmers' organizations; indeed, in some localities, farmers' organizations are evident only in that one or two farmers are or were members and occasionally attended county, state, or other meetings of the group. Yet such farmers' organizations may have considerable influence in other localities. One farmers' organization in a community can be of great value.¹ On the other hand, two or more farmers' organizations may be active in the same community; if their policies or programs are at variance, they may be the source of considerable friction in the community.

Numbers of Local Organizations

"Organizations and institutions spring up instinctively," stated C. J. Galpin,² who made one of the first state-wide studies in America of organizations in which farm people take part. His study called attention to what was then (1916) a growing rural club movement in Wisconsin. He reported that 21,159 neighborhood and community meetings were held in rural school houses; he called attention to the 55 subordinate granges, the 375 locals of the American Society of Equity, and the 250 independent clubs of

¹ See Kenneth MacLeish and Kimball Young, "Culture of a Contemporary Community: Landaff, New Hampshire." Washington, D. C.: Rural Life Studies: 3, BAE, USDA, April 1942, page 75, for the influence of the Grange in the community.

² C. J. Galpin, "The Social Anatomy of An Agricultural Community," Res. Bull. 34. Madison: Agr. Exp. Sta. of the Uni. of Wis., May 1915, page 25.

the state. He reported that 25,000 different persons were members in all types of clubs in the state and estimated that 175,000 people were reached in rural areas by various types of neighborhood and community meetings.³

A study made 11 years later in only five counties in the same state disclosed 351 clubs and organizations functioning in these five counties alone. This number did not include those centered in villages or towns, those affiliated with fraternal or religious institutions, or those purely informal.⁴ The study disclosed a range of from 42 to 94 organizations per county. Each one was available to from 127 to 227 people who lived in the area. The areas served ranged from 4.2 square miles to 20.4 square miles per organization.

Similar studies were made in Illinois in 1930 and again in 1940. A total of 12,336 groups were reported as active in 622 localities in 1940 (townships or other minor civil divisions), or an average of 19.8 groups per locality. In these studies all organized groups, church sponsored and others, were listed. The number ranged from 2 active groups in an open-country township to more than 75 in a township with a small town.⁵

Description of Groups

Rural organizations in a community can be studied or described in at least six ways: (1) by name; (2) by affiliation; (3) by structure; (4) by purpose, interest or function; (5) by type of membership; and (6) by area served. An adequate description of the kinds of organizations in a community will require analyzing them in all of these six ways.

1. NAME. Simply listing rural organizations by name will serve to enumerate the organizations in a community, but it gives

³ C. J. Galpin and D. W. Sawtelle, "Rural Clubs in Wisconsin," Res. Bull. 271. Madison: Agr. Exp. Sta. of the Uni. of Wis., 1916.

⁴ J. H. Kolb and A. F. Wileden, "Special Interest Groups in Rural Society," Res. Bull. 84. Madison: Agr. Exp. Sta. of the Uni. of Wis., 1927.

⁵ D. E. Lindstrom, "An Inventory of Voluntary Groups Participated in by Farm People of Illinois, 1930," RSM-3. Urbana: Uni. of Ill., Agr. Exp. Sta., Mimeo. pub., 1930. See also D. E. Lindstrom, "Changes in Rural Organizations in Illinois, 1930 to 1940." Urbana: Illinois Farm Economics, Number 84, May 1942, pages 288-291.

only a clue to the real function of each organization. Nevertheless, such an enumeration is the starting point for a study of the organizations: parent-teacher associations, farmers' clubs, community clubs, 4-H clubs, homemakers' clubs, cooperative creameries, spray rings, breeders' associations, horticultural societies, cow-testing associations, church societies, cooperative shipping associations, milk producers' associations, and others. A carefully checked list of organizations, such as were found to be active in Illinois rural communities, might well include the following names:

American Legion	Household science club
Band	Hunting club
Baseball club	Isaac Walton League
Boy Scouts	Knights of Columbus
Boys' 4-H club	Knights of Pythias
Bridge club	Ladies' aid society
Camp Fire Girls	League of Women Voters
Choral society	Library Club
Commercial club	Literary Club
Community club	Livestock shipping association
Community market	Masonic lodge
Community telephone company	Men's Bible club
Cooperative elevator	Missionary society
Cream shipping association	Modern Woodmen
D. A. R.	Modern Workmen
Dramatic club	Mutual Insurance Company
Equity Union	Oddfellows lodge
Fair association	Orchestra
Farm bureau unit	Parent-teacher association
Farmers' institute	Reading circle
Farmers' protective association	Recreation club
Farmers' purchasing association	Sewing club
Farmers' union	Spraying ring
G. A. R.	Subordinate grange
Garden club	Sunday School
Girl Reserves	Threshing ring
Girl Scouts	W. C. T. U.
Girls' 4-H club	Woman's club
Herd improvement association	Y. M. C. A.
Historical association	Y. W. C. A.
Home bureau unit	Young people's church club
Horticultural society	

The groups holding meetings in a community can then be classified by types: (1) educational; (2) religious; (3) social; and (4) economic. Such an analysis will doubtless show, as in the Illinois study, that about a third of the groups enumerated are educational—that is, they provide for procuring and exchanging information, usually vocational, or for advancing culture by developing talent and appreciation of music, drama, and the other arts. In the Illinois study about a third were religious; one-fifth to one-sixth were social; and one-fifth to one-eighth were economic—that is, they were concerned with mutual-aid efforts, both commercial and noncommercial.⁶

An examination of the list of organizations will reveal the predominance or lack of farmers' organizations. In many rural, especially village-centered communities few of the organizations are farmers' organizations; farmers participate as much or more in other rural organizations as they do in farmers' organizations as such. For example, there were no farmers' organizations active in Harmony Community in Georgia, according to a USDA study.⁷ On the other hand, the farmers' organization may be the most important organization in the community, as was found true of the Grange in Landaff Community in New Hampshire.⁸ Listing of organizations can indicate the nature and variety of interests in a community served by organizations.

2. **AFFILIATION.** A description of the type of affiliation of each of the organizations listed would show whether each group was (1) a unit of some more widespread organization, such as a subordinate grange, working as a community unit of a county, state, or national organization; (2) a local organization which is a member of a county council, federation or association; (3) a local organization cooperating with county, state, or national organizations by having no organic relationship; (4) a local group affiliated with other

⁶ As shown by the Illinois studies.

⁷ Waller Wynne, "Culture of a Contemporary Community: Harmony, Georgia." Washington, D. C.: Rural Life Studies: 6, BAE, USDA, January 1943, page 42.

⁸ MacLeish and Young, *op. cit.*

groups in the community or neighborhood such as through a council organization; or (5) a local group independent of any other group, that is, having none of the above forms of relationship to other groups.

One group may have more than one relationship to other groups for it may be a unit of a county, state or national organization and also be a member of a community council. The local group with no organic relationship to overhead (county, state or national) organizations is more likely to have cooperative or "council" relationships, either in the community or on a county-wide basis. The local organization which is a unit of the overhead organization, on the other hand, is more likely to maintain its identity and keep its loyalties to the overhead group than will groups only maintaining cooperative relationships.

A simpler description of alternative possible affiliations can be stated as (1) local unit affiliation to overhead groups; (2) local independent groups having no formal affiliation; and (3) non-localized organizations, that is, those having members in the community but having no organized group functioning in the community. This type of description recognizes the influence, for example, of county-wide organizations in the community, which would not be the case if only locally organized groups were listed. In general most organizations of influence in the community are local affiliated groups, only about one-sixth being local independent and one-seventh non-localized.

3. STRUCTURE. Farmers' and rural organizations vary widely in structure: They may function with a *minimum of structure*; they may be *formally organized with only voluntary leadership*; or they may have a *highly formalized structure*—having elected officers and boards of directors with hired professional secretaries or agents. These may be characterized respectively as informal, semi-formal, and formal.

a. *Informal organization.* The simplest structure for a rural organization is that exhibited by one brought into being for a specified purpose, such as to aid a stricken neighbor gather his crops. In this case the work of the group is organized with a leader

chosen quite informally and by a division of labor arrived at through free and amiable discussion. Often, by easy agreement, first one and then the other takes leadership or it is given to one by tacit agreement for arranging for various group functions.

b. *Semi-formal organization.* The more formal groups are indicated by their officer and committee setups. Although the officers for various groups differ in title, tenure, and number, the framework around which most of the groups function is about the same. It generally has five divisions: (1) administration; (2) record-keeping; (3) care of finances; (4) program planning; and (5) care of special duties. The manner in which the officers function in different types of organizations apparently does not vary as much as does the number of officers and their tenure.⁹ The following table gives a composite picture of the situation found in various Illinois rural communities. (See Table I, page 28).

3. *Formal organization.* Highly formalized organizations usually have boards of directors and executive committees, and they frequently employ professional leaders, managers, agents, or specialists. Even institutions such as the church have similar formal structures, although a great deal of the responsibility for handling the work of the institution falls on the shoulders of the professional leaders.

The officials, elected from the body of the membership, assume policy-making duties, primarily. Often the county, state, and national organizational activities are carried on through this type of structure. In some cases, the entire work of the organization is administered by county, state, and national leaders, both lay and professional. The local unit may be merely a member-contact group, or there may be no local unit at all, contacts with members being made by county and other leaders. The weakness in such an arrangement is that the bulk of the membership may have little to do with policy-making and hence come to look upon the organization as simply a service agency, each service having its price.

⁹ D. E. Lindstrom, "Local Group Organization Among Illinois Farm People," Bulletin 392. Urbana: Uni. of Ill. Agr. Exp. Sta., 1933, page 145.

TABLE 1.
OFFICER AND COMMITTEE SETUP IN LOCAL RURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Type of group	Administration	Record keeping	Care of finances	Program planning	Care of special duties
Community club	President and vice-president	Secretary	Usually by secretary	Administration officers and monthly committee	Entertainment and social committee; special committee as needed
Farm bureau	Chairman or director	Secretary	Secretary	Program Committee	Project leaders; hosts or entertainment committee; special committee as needed
Parent-teacher association	President and vice-president	Secretary	Usually by Secretary	Program Committee	Entertainment committee; special committee as needed
Home bureau	Chairman and vice-chairman	Secretary	Treasurer	Executive committee of 5 or more	Local leaders; music and recreational chairman; hostesses; special committee as needed
Local grange	Master and overseer	Secretary	Treasurer	Lecturer	Officers of ritual; special committee as needed
Community unit	Chairman and vice-chairman	Secretary	Usually by secretary	Program planning committee	Project committee; executive committee; entertainment and social committee; special committee as needed
Farmers' club	President and vice-president	Secretary	Usually by secretary	Administration officers and monthly committee	Host or hostess; program or social committee as needed

4. INTERESTS SERVED AND FUNCTIONS PERFORMED. The name or designation of the group may indicate the interests that it serves or the reasons why it was formed; sometimes, however, it does not. The 351 groups studied in Wisconsin were classified into 12 major interests, as follows:¹⁰

TABLE 2.
INTERESTS THAT GROUPS SERVE, IN ORDER OF
FREQUENCY OF APPEARANCE

Interest class	Organizations	
	Number	Per cent
All organizations.....	351*	100.0
Social enjoyment.....	252	71.8
Better farming.....	115	32.8
Aid for school and teacher.....	84	24.0
Better business.....	59	16.8
Young people's interests.....	59	16.8
Health and social welfare.....	41	11.7
Home improvement.....	40	11.2
Public and civic affairs.....	15	4.3
General community betterment.....	13	3.7
Unification of locals.....	5	1.4
Mutual improvement.....	5	1.4
Aid for church and preacher.....	5	1.4

* The sum of the organizations in the various interest classes greatly exceeds the total number of organizations because any one organization may fall into more than one of the classes.

Studies in other parts of the country showed that similar interests were being served. In Illinois, 230 groups in which farm people participated helped to develop acquaintanceship and fellowship, provided the opportunity for the exchange of ideas for individual, group or community improvement, and provided for general social and educational interests.¹¹ In Virginia, groups were classified as rural educational societies, farm organizations, and community marketing associations. Rural educational organizations included such groups as parent-teacher associations, farmers' institutes, and homemakers' organizations. Among farm organizations were found farmers' unions, granges, farm bureaus,

¹⁰ Rolb and Brunner, *op. cit.*, page 144.

¹¹ Lindstrom, "Inventory of Rural Organizations," *op. cit.*, page 3.

and many independent farmers' clubs. Commodity marketing associations included the various economic cooperatives, exchanges, and mutual aid societies.¹²

These various studies show the numerous interests about which rural organizations form. A composite classification of the above, to serve as a basis for analyzing group interests in the rural community, might well take the following form:

Aesthetic: Art, drama, music, and similar groups.

Civic: Community improvement, patriotic, and voters' clubs.

Health: Health associations and medical societies.

Home improvement: Home demonstration, household science, and similar groups.

Intergroup cooperation: Councils and associations or federations.

Recreation: Athletic, playground, social recreational, and similar groups.

Social enjoyment: Card, fraternal, visiting, and other groups.

Social welfare: Aid to needy, children's aid, delinquency prevention, and similar societies.

Socio-economic: Farm and business improvement groups.

Socio-educational: School improvement groups and all groups with educational programs carried on through meetings.

Socio-religious: Church congregations and societies and clubs formed within the church or around religious interests.

Youth-serving: Groups made up primarily of youth and carried on through officers selected from among youth.

Rural organizations are not always formed about a single interest or for a single purpose. Many, such as the granges, may be classified as social enjoyment, fraternal, socio-economic, and socio-educational groups. Hence, in trying to classify rural organizations on the basis of interest, it is necessary to attempt to determine the major interest served and put the organization in that classification, then list the other interests which it may be serving.

Rural organizations may be organized to serve certain interests and yet perform only allied or entirely different functions. In

¹² W. E. Garnett, "Rural Organization in Relation to Rural Life in Virginia," Bulletin 256. Blacksburg: Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station, 1927. See also Edmund deS. Brunner and J. H. Kolb, "Rural Social Trends." New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1933, page 242 and footnote 1, and Edmund deS. Brunner and Irving Lorge, "Rural Trends in Depression Years." New York: Columbia University Press, 1937, page 249.

general, however, all organizations can be said to provide for (1) the conservation of social energy, (2) the accomplishment of ends otherwise impossible, (3) the development of personality, and (4) the stabilization of relations among people.¹³

Often the function of the organization is best revealed by what it accomplishes. The members of groups studied in Illinois, for example, reported six principal functions performed by these groups: (1) undertaking projects of mutual benefit; (2) procuring and disseminating information from various sources of value to the members; (3) developing group spirit; (4) providing social activities; (5) creating belief in the value of rural organizations for improving rural life; and (6) furthering acquaintanceship among farm people.¹⁴

A simple functional classification governing most of the groups studied could be derived from the above examples:

1. Civic improvement
2. Economic improvement
3. Educational advancement
4. Health protection
5. Religious improvement
6. Social enjoyment

Some organizations, as has been pointed out, will perform only one function and some, more than one—as many as three or four and sometimes five. An economic cooperative may, for example, serve only to increase prices through cooperative marketing; it may, however, also provide membership contacts through community meetings and thus increase educational advancement and social enjoyment; a rural cooperative may also provide for religious expression.¹⁵

¹³ Sims, *op. cit.*, pages 482 and 483.

¹⁴ Lindstrom, *op. cit.*, page 5.

¹⁵ Toyohiko Kagawa, "The Christian Internationale." Friends of Jesus, 75 Kobinata Daimochi 3-chrome, Koishshikawa, Japan, June 1933. See also M. M. Coady, "The Social Significance of the Cooperative Movement." New York: The Cooperative League of the U. S. A., 1945.

5. TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP. Rural organizations may also be characterized by their membership requirements:

a. Some have an open membership; they encourage everyone in the community to come to their meetings and to take part in their activities.

b. Some have membership restrictions based on dues, assessments, or other forms of financial consideration. They are selective in that only those who can and wish to pay the sum required are included; the higher the sum, the more selective the organization is likely to be. High dues, however, call for greater service from the organization. Farm bureau organizations in Illinois, for example, charge \$15.00 per year per member. Membership in the organization carries with it such compensations as the privilege of participating in patronage refunds from cooperatives that are set up and controlled by the organization. A higher percentage of farmers in the better agricultural sections than in the poorer ones are members of farm bureaus in Illinois.¹⁸

c. A few organizations choose members on the basis of qualification—that is, they require some degree of skill or have secret aspects which bar those who cannot qualify or who have scruples against secret societies. These organizations may select their members on the basis of class, occupation, or race. Thus, the membership becomes more select as more membership requirements are used.

Organizations endeavoring to serve all the people in a community can be the most democratic; however, they usually suffer from lack of support from many of those who secure benefits from them. It is sometimes difficult to place the responsibility on those who feel they are making no particular sacrifice for the group and who fail to gain a sense of loyalty for or pride in it. Organizations with more rigid membership requirements can assign members the responsibility for carrying on the duties necessary to the functioning of the organization; after they become members, they can be charged with some definite responsibility. Leaders who fail to

¹⁸ D. E. Lindstrom, "Indices of Human Welfare With Reference to Rural Areas," RSM-13. Urbana: Uni. of Ill. Agr. Exp. Sta. Mimeo. Pub., 1942.

secure such cooperation also fail to make the organization of the greatest usefulness possible and frequently court failure for it.

6. AREA SERVED. The first and most important group in rural life beyond the family is the *neighborhood*; it is "that geographic group of farm families having some local cohesion."¹⁷ The neighborhood has been and still is an important area in which farmers' and rural organizations function. For a long time, the one-room school house, the open-country church, or the cross-roads store formed the neighborhood meeting center. Even today, the one-room school district or open-country church parish forms the area basis for meetings of many farmers' clubs, community clubs, rural parent-teacher associations, and 4-H clubs.

The *community* is the next important area of service for farmers' and rural organizations. "There is no sharp line of distinction between community and neighborhood."¹⁸ The rural community is larger than the neighborhood, often approximating the average midwest township in size, though many are considerably larger. Many rural organizations look upon the township as the area for the basic or foundation organization—the local community unit. In most cases, however, natural boundaries for the community unit do not usually follow township lines; in some cases, these natural lines have been determined by mapping to provide a picture of areas served by community units. Such a procedure is desirable if the natural groupings of rural people are to be found.¹⁹

The membership can be more selective in a community than in a neighborhood. The neighborhood meetings usually include everyone. The number of people upon whom to draw is larger in the community; but intimacy and cordiality, which are characteristic of neighborhood gatherings, may be sacrificed. With modern means of communication, the community is likely to be

¹⁷ Kolb, "Rural Primary Groups," *op. cit.*, page 6.

¹⁸ Dwight Sanderson, "Locating the Rural Community," Bulletin 413. Ithaca: Cornell Uni. Extension Ser., June 1939.

¹⁹ See D. E. Lindstrom, "American Rural Life," *op. cit.*, Chapter VIII, for a description of methods of mapping neighborhoods and communities.

the better area in which to form and promote local units of farmers' and rural organizations. Groups, such as farm bureaus, larger community clubs, some farmers' clubs, home bureaus, and most town-country organizations, serve communities. In Illinois, the model size of area served was from 30 to 35 square miles; the maximum distance from which people came who belonged to such groups was seldom over 8 miles, even where roads were improved and motor transportation was common.²⁰

County organizations have been developing rapidly in the last two decades. Some are simply federations of locals but others are county units of state and national organizations.²¹ Some of the characteristic types of larger community or county organizations are: Chamber of Commerce, cooperative marketing associations, church council, ministerial alliance or Council of Religious Education, Dairyman's League, farm bureau, Federation of Women's Clubs, 4-H club councils, county granges, health units, county home bureaus, libraries, parent-teacher council, Red Cross, and Sunday-School associations. A majority of these organizations have paid personnel, and they have large memberships.

Governmentally-sponsored organizations usually operate on the county basis with paid, professional staffs. Among the most important are the Extension Service, the Production Marketing Administration (which depends largely upon community committees and community meetings for contacts with farmers), Soil Conservation Associations (which are sponsored by the Federal Soil Conservation Service), the Production Credit Associations, (and other groups set up by the Farm Credit Administration), the Farmers' Home Administration (which have county committees made up of a few selected farmers, and which hold county and community meetings for their clients), and Rural Electrification Associations (which operate through informally-selected county and local committees to make surveys, to secure "sign-ups," and, where desired, to set up cooperatives.) Characteristic of most

²⁰ D. E. Lindstrom, "Local Group Organization Among Illinois Farm People." Bull. 392. Urbana: Uni. of Ill. Agr. Exp. Sta., June 1933.

²¹ Kolb and Brunner, *op. cit.*, pages 332-335.

of these county organizations is the service agency aspect. Professional leadership has almost replaced voluntary leadership for carrying on the work of the organization; movement too far in the direction of the use of professional leadership may result in apathy or at least in lack of participation by the people themselves. Some form of community organization is essential for such contacts.

District (several counties), *state*, *regional* and *national* organizations have grown rapidly in the last two or three decades. Most state organizations, however, are federations of county organizations. Some are associations, the individual members belonging to the state organizations as well as to the county or local ones. The same situation applies to some national organizations. State organizations have federations; but some national organizations provide direct individual memberships.

Only a few rural organizations operate on the *international* basis. The most notable example was the Associated Country Women of the World. This organization operated more nearly on the pattern of a true rural organization than did any other international rural group. New patterns may be developed as a result of the organization of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Some international conferences of leaders of farmers' organizations have already been held since World War II. It is hoped that some effective world organization will evolve to provide closer contact between rural organizations now functioning in the various countries of the world. This should be in addition to the governmentally sponsored FAO and should concern itself not only with economic but with social and cultural problems as well. The farmers of the world make up two-thirds of its population and they should have an effective voice in world affairs.

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why should we study the numbers and kind of organizations found in rural communities?
2. When you think of organizations in a rural community, by what names do you know them? How numerous are they?
3. In what ways are local organizations affiliated with overhead or other local organizations? In general, for what purposes are these affiliations made?
4. What is the meaning of the structure of an organization? What structural forms can be found in rural organizations?
5. What are the types of interests usually served by rural organizations?
6. Make your own classification of functions performed by rural organizations.
7. How are memberships determined in rural organizations?
8. What areas are served by the different kinds of rural organizations?

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. What happened to the numbers and types of rural organizations in the depression period? Brunner and Lorge.
2. Describe the process by which neighborhood or locality organizations may be distinguished from special interest groups. Lindstrom.
3. Make a list of organizations which you think serve the interests of farm people primarily. What are their functions?

EXERCISE

Make complete list of the organizations active in the community you have chosen for study and describe them by affiliation, purpose, structure, functions, membership requirements, and area served.

PART II

Historical Backgrounds

America has been called the world's great melting pot of nationalities. Rural America was settled largely by North Europeans; most of these were English, Welsh, Scotch, German, and Scandinavian. In colonial days the settlements were in villages, as they were in many parts of Europe, and in parishes. Following the Revolutionary War, nationality and religious groups settled in clusters here and there over the land. Then with the coming of the Homestead and similar Acts the land was settled rapidly in quarter and half sections, following the surveys, the people living on the land. The English brought the agricultural societies, fairs and farmers' clubs, the Germans their tendency to form close-knit neighborhood groups, and the Scandinavians their cooperative ways which they had learned by hard experience in the "old country." American farmers have advanced far in modern times with their general farmers' organizations and the producer cooperatives; some of the lessons learned leading to these developments came from their forebears, some from experience here; they still have much to learn, especially from the Scandinavians, and the European farmers, likewise, can learn much from their American cousins.

The first forms of farmers' and rural organizations in the New World were the Agricultural Societies, farmers' clubs and fairs following the English patterns, these having been started even before the Revolutionary War. The early colonial settlements upon the land—the village-centered communities of New England and the parish or county system induced by the plantation form of agriculture—were social organizations for the rural people in themselves. But when the farmers began to settle upon their own tracts of land—a move which spread rapidly after the Revolutionary War—new forms of organization had to be developed.

Before the Civil War the westward migrations concentrated the settlers' attention upon their new neighborhoods and communities, but here and there, particularly in the Midwest, farmers' clubs, organized on the pattern of the Old English farmers' clubs, sprang up and became the nucleus from which came some of the first farmers' movements. Even before the Civil War there were farmers' conventions which pointed to the importance of agriculture and the need for redress of wrongs.

The real farmers' movements came soon after the close of the Civil War, and they laid the groundwork for many of the later movements for organization both of general farmers' organizations and for cooperatives. Out of this period came, also, the impetus for the educational and country life activities that marked the first two decades of the present century.

Movements of the contemporary period include the efforts to get relief measures passed in the decade of the 20's, the direct action period of the 30's and the highly governmentally controlled and aided efforts to meet war and postwar needs of the 40's. A review of these movements and those of the earlier periods reveals the extent to which they wove themselves into the building of a new nation and how gradually the farmers became more and more aware of their needs and of the power of organization.

CHAPTER IV

INFLUENCES OF FOREIGN DEVELOPMENTS

Much of the literature relating to farmers' and rural organizations in European countries, from which most of the settlers in the United States came, lay emphasis upon the economic aspects. Doubtless the economic aspect in organizations seemed most important because European farmers already had their social organizations, for they lived in villages where social contacts were many and easily made, thus making unnecessary an elaborate system of rural or farmers' organizations. Living in the villages, the farmers and the villagers were part and parcel of the same system of social organizations. Hence economic cooperation in many of the European countries was often a by-product or result of cooperation on other planes—social, educational or religious. The English, Scandinavian, German or other nationality groups migrating to this country carried with them many of the Old World systems of social, educational, or religious organization, or adapted them to the new environment in which they chose to live.

In view of the fact that "a collective mode of living has been the normal way of agriculturalists until of late generations," but that the "isolated American mode of rural living is an unstable variant which is proving itself wholly inadequate to the situation," some social scientists feel that "a reconstruction of our rural society along village community lines is desirable."¹ The fact is that some of the European patterns were transplanted to the American environment and a few of them persisted, but the prevailing pattern of settlement has been the scattered-farmstead form. Upon this pattern has been built the present system of farmers' and rural organizations. The tendency or desire to cooperate or to work with one's neighbor was there, probably carried over from the "old country," for the first American efforts were mutual aid or trade work cooperation. Native patterns have developed in the new

¹ N. L. Sims, "Elements of Rural Sociology." New York: Crowell, pages 27 to 28.

environment by a people not far removed from European influences ; they have been enhanced or retarded partly because of these influences : nationality, religious, or other Old World social bonds.

Scandinavian Influences

The changes in farmers' and rural organizations in Denmark reflect somewhat the developments in the other Scandinavian countries. The economic cooperatives have had most attention, but these followed or accompanied significant social and educational changes, knowledge of which should be of considerable importance to the student of farmers' organizations in the United States.

1. SOCIAL AND COOPERATIVE LIFE. Danish farmers, once serfs, have gained the right, through the years, to "live together, play together and work together, with the consequence that their outlook on life has become social and cooperative."² Danish cooperation had its beginnings among poverty-stricken serfs more than 600 years ago. Its beginning lay in the will and persistence to develop systems of mutual assistance, stimulated by the leaders, such as Grundvig, who encouraged such activities wherever possible. The result has been a feeling of solidarity and a sense of the benefits of mutual aid which has carried cooperation into almost all forms of Danish rural life.³

2. FOLK EDUCATION. The Danish system of rural education, which supplies training in rural citizenship as well as in scientific agriculture, was the foundation upon which Denmark's agricultural cooperation was built. This system, embodied in the people's high schools, is an educational system for mature men and women (the working and producing classes) as well as for the boys and girls. It was "conceived mainly in response to the needs of the rural population, and gets its support from the Danish rural neighborhoods. The ideals are and have been the ideals of those democratic neighborhoods which were simply transplanted into an educational

² E. C. Branson, "Farm Life Abroad." Raleigh: Uni. of N. C. Press, 1924, page 216.

³ F. C. Howe: "Denmark: The Cooperative Way." New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1936, pages 33 and 96.

system.”⁴ The schools are the center of the life of their respective communities, providing community halls, and functioning as centers of politics, of propaganda and of the cooperative movement.”⁵ The first school was organized at Redding in 1844.

The movement spread rapidly. By 1868 the first school was organized in Sweden. These and the activities carried on in them, or stimulated by them, in the form of study circles, libraries and lectures, are a significant form of self-education. “By taking part in the work of an association and sharing in educational activities, the individual farmer acquires a schooling from which he may benefit, not only in his work in the association, but also in his work as a farmer and citizen.”⁶

3. ECONOMIC COOPERATION. An outgrowth of these socio-educational organizations were the first cooperatives. For example, a cooperative near Hjedding, Denmark, was organized in 1882. A young college-trained dairy specialist suggested the cooperative plan as a means toward the manufacture of a standardized quality product that would command higher prices than did other similar products. A number of meetings were held to discuss the matter. Definite plans were made and contracts were easily secured from farmers to form the cooperative. Similar methods have been used to organize other cooperatives until about everything the Danish farmer has to sell and much of what he buys is handled cooperatively.⁷ The selling cooperatives take the member's product and completely processes it before it is passed on to the market. In this way they have a great influence on the quality of the product produced. In this regard, as in others, farmers of America can still learn from the Danish.⁸

⁴ W. A. Terpenning, “Village and Open-Country Neighborhoods.” New York: Century Company, 1931, page 333.

⁵ Howe, *op. cit.*, page 96.

⁶ “Sweden.” European Conference on Rural Life, Series of League of Nations Publications, 21, Geneva, July 1939, page 37.

⁷ Chris L. Christensen, “Agricultural Cooperation in Denmark, Bull. 1266. Washington, D. C.: BAE, USDA, 1924, page 88.

⁸ D. W. Brooks, “Cooperative Frontiers.” 1946 Blue Book, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, 1731 Eye Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.

Sweden

The Danish system of cooperation is similar to that in other Scandinavian countries. Practically all farmers are members of one or more of the cooperatives, and most of them belong to several. In Sweden, for example, before the outbreak of World War II, 85 per cent of all of the milk produced was marketed cooperatively, and the farmers' national organization in the dairy branch controlled the entire export of butter and cheese. An estimated three-fourths of the slaughtering of both cattle and pigs in Sweden took place before the War through the farmers' own marketing organizations.⁹

1. **PRODUCER AND CONSUMER COOPERATION.** The consumers' cooperatives in Sweden started with the farmers; the first was formed in 1851 among farmers in a remote parish in central Sweden. The early cooperatives were supported exclusively by the farmers and the lower middle classes. Today a considerable part of the retail trade of Sweden is transacted by the consumer cooperatives.¹⁰ Though the producer cooperative movement is independent of the consumer movement, agreements between the two systems of cooperation have made possible equal representation, avenues for arbitration and collaboration relating to the interests of consumers, distributors and producers in the Swedish food market.¹¹

2. **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION.** It is significant that the farmers are a part of the consumer cooperative movement in Sweden. This movement has involved all of the Scandinavian countries: in 1918 a joint purchasing organization was founded by the cooperative wholesale societies of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Before World War II the business was steadily growing; substantial quantities of dried fruit, coffee, copra, rice, grain, etc., were purchased for the two million cooperative house-

⁹ Mauritz Bonow, "Sweden: Its Economic and Social Life." Published by Le Comité officiel pour la participation de la Suède à L'Exposition Internationale de Paris en 1937, page 39.

¹⁰ "Sweden: A Wartime Survey." Distributed by the American-Swedish News Exchange, Inc., 630 Fifth Avenue, New York, undated, pages 109 to 118.

¹¹ Bonow, *op. cit.*, page 40.

holds in the Scandinavian countries. The whole structure of the Swedish, as well as other Scandinavian cooperative movements, is a manifestation of economic democracy. Constant member contact is made through study circles, cooperative groups, women's guilds, and other auxiliary agencies all over the country. Moreover, "Swedish cooperators have always regarded the international cooperative movement and the mutual relations it fosters as an aid to world peace; they feel it strengthens the efforts to guarantee all countries and nations—irrespective of language and race—liberty, peace and security as well as access on equal terms to the economic resources of the earth."¹²

The combination of the Scandinavian system of adult education—the people's high schools—economic cooperation, and close-knit community life, all undergirded with a religious fervor or zeal, has helped to give these countries the place they held before the war and are again regaining in progressive cooperation and community life. The elements present there which seem to be lacking in the American systems are the close relationships between the social organization system in the neighborhood and the community and the system of cooperatives and farmers' organizations. In the Scandinavian countries these seem unified—a part of the cooperative life of the farm family—in America there must still be attained that unity and deepseated place in the everyday lives of the people that the folk movement has in Scandinavia. Also, American farmers do not accept and participate in consumer cooperation as do the Scandinavian farmers, and they should. There are evidences of it here and there, but in general there seems to be a feeling of hostility or at least suspicion of the consumer cooperative movement among farmers in the United States.

The Basis for Irish Rural Reform

It was from Sir Horace Plunkett, the great leader of reform movements in England and Ireland, that the saying, "Better Farming, Better Business, Better Living" originated. The conditions found in Ireland and the methods used to secure the reforms

¹² "Sweden: A Wartime Survey," *op. cit.*, page 117.

that took place, which realized upon these goals, should be of great interest to American farmers.

At one time the farm people of Ireland were faced with poverty —“not only economic poverty, but poverty of industrial character and social life.”¹³ The beginnings of agricultural reform in Ireland lay in an educational campaign which was instigated by Sir Horace Plunkett and his followers. “To meet the manifold problems of economic distress and social instability upon which the activities of the State alone could have slight effect, Sir Horace Plunkett proposed a new agency, entirely voluntary, and based upon the principle of cooperation.”¹⁴

1. EDUCATION IN COOPERATIVE ORGANIZATION IN THE COMMUNITY. The educational campaign which was instituted had its chief influence in the community. Organizers began with people who were getting but a bare existence from tilling the soil; by a system of education they were enabled to get a cooperative enterprise under way. This was in spite of the prevalence of storekeepers and money lenders to whom many of the peasants were bound in virtual slavery.

“I am familiar with a district in the northwest of Ireland,” stated George Russell, the famous Irish poet. “It was a most wretchedly poor district. The farmers were at the mercy of the Gombeen traders and the agricultural middlemen. Then, a dozen years ago, a cooperative society was formed. I am sure that the oldest inhabitant would agree with me that more changes for the better for farmers have taken place since the cooperative was started than he could remember in all his previous life. The reign of the Gombeen men is over. The farmers control their own buying and selling. Their organization markets for them the eggs and poultry. It produces seeds, fertilizers, and domestic requirements. It turns the members’ pigs into bacon. They have a village hall and a woman’s organization. They sell the products of women’s industry. They have a cooperative band, social gatherings, and

¹³ Lionel Smith-Gordon and Laurence C. Staples, “Rural Reconstruction in Ireland.” London: P. S. King & Son, Ltd., 1917, page 15.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, page 50.

concerts. They have spread out into half-a-dozen parishes, going southward and westward with their propaganda; and in half-a-dozen years, in all that district previously without organization, there will be well-organized farmers' guilds, concentrating in themselves the trade of their district, having meeting places where the opinion of members can be taken, having machinery, committees, and executive officers to carry out whatever may be decided on, and having funds, or profits, the joint property of the community, which can be depended upon to finance their undertakings." ¹⁵

2. THE ROLE OF THE LEADER. The success of the agricultural societies in Ireland has, to a large measure, depended on loyal and enthusiastic leadership. The movement has been in the direction of the cooperative community. The societies not only perform economic services for their members in the way of buying and selling, but also supply community activity in the village hall which forms the center for community gatherings and in which programs of recreation and cultural activity are provided.¹⁶

3. IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION. In appraising the movement, George Russell says, "Wherever rural prosperity is reported of any country, inquire into it, and it will be found that it depends on rural organization. Wherever there is rural decay, if it is inquired into, it will be found that there was a rural population but no rural community, no organization." ¹⁷

Changes in Rural Organizations in Germany

Village life in Germany, unlike the scattered farmstead arrangements in Denmark, Sweden and Ireland, has contributed genuinely to the social and economic organization of the farm people. "The small landowning peasants do not have to get together. They are together already; have been together during a thousand years of history. Their children play together, sing together in the village schools, dance together in the seasonal holidays, practice together

¹⁵ Russell, George, "The National Being." New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930, pages 38-39.

¹⁶ Smith-Gordon and Staples, *op. cit.*, pages 268-273.

¹⁷ Russell, *op. cit.*, page 39.

in the village bands and song clubs. They come to know one another through and through. They know after a while who among them has the grace to stick tight in a farm organization, say in a cooperative credit union, a type of organization that exists in almost every farm village in Germany. . . . What cooperative farm enterprise lacks in America is compact community life, and this lack is usually fatal to farm organizations of every sort. Successful farm cooperation must be based upon country community life."¹⁸

1. LOCAL INITIATION. The Kreis Verein in north Germany and the Bezirks Verein in south Germany were county unions which started from local farmer groups that formed because farmers needed political representation within the country. The first farmers' union in Germany was organized in Saxony in 1763. In 1842, the unions then organized formed the Agricultural Central Union for the province of Saxony. With village life as a basis, county unions in Germany became the backbone of the system of German agricultural education and every farmer of any means at all in Germany contributed to them.

2. OPERATION IN SMALL GROUPS. The agricultural credit societies mentioned above were started under the impetus of Herr F. W. Raiffesen, a burgomaster of a small district of Westerwald. He was confronted with a population of small peasants who were impoverished to the verge of misery, who were in the hands of usurers, and who were in part, at least, unable to read or write.¹⁹ The societies that he organized operated in a small area and with a small group.

Thus, he could gauge the solvency of every debtor and protect the members from losses. The societies were essentially local in their operations, each dealing with its individual members in the district in which it had been set up. Any individual seeking to

¹⁸ E. C. Branson, "Farm Village Life in South Germany," *Rural America*, Jan., 1925, page 11. Also quoted in Sims, "Elements of Rural Sociology," page 50.

¹⁹ "Year-Book of Agricultural Cooperation, 1930." London: Cooperative Wholesale Society Ltd., page 373.

borrow money from the credit union was likely to be known to the manager as well as to the majority of the other members.²⁰

3. DANGERS OF TOTALITARIAN DOMINATION. Drastic changes came in German agricultural organization with the coming of State Socialism. Holt found that the "Reichsnährstand" (or the "food estate"—the totalitarian administrative framework governing German farm life) consolidated the three former farmer organizations. The new organization was nominally "self-governing in the sense that the members of the various divisions and sections confer. But the majority vote did not establish policy; the big man or leader in any association or group within it was selected for the group only with the approval of, or appointed directly and subject to removal by the government."²¹ The "Food Estate" had three divisions. Division I, to care for the men on the farm, educated him politically and socially and was a means of promoting, by social pressure, the various national drives. Division II carried on the drives. Division III consolidated processors and distributors into "compulsory monopolistic marketing associations or processing syndicates which regulate trade prices, production, sales quotas, and quality standards."²² The German farmer's economy was thus socialized to the extent that his actions were highly controlled, and the attempt was made to socialize his loyalties.

Rural organization in Germany had projected itself into county, regional, and national systems. It provided for adult education for farmers and was an influence on political life and a medium for constant contact with the average farmer. Ironically enough these systems of voluntary organization had become the "veins and arteries" of the Nazi totalitarian state—the means whereby the state controlled the actions and loyalties of the farmers.

²⁰ Pratt, E. A., "The Organization of Agriculture," page 49.

²¹ John B. Holt, "Changes in German Rural Life." *Jour. of Rur. Sociology*, Vol. 2, No. 3, Sept. 1937, pages 268 to 269. See also Paul Honigshheim, "The Roots of the Nazi Concept of the Ideal German Peasant." *Rur. Soc.*, Vol. 12, No. 1, March 1947, pages 20-21.

²² *Ibid.*, pages 270 to 273.

French Agricultural Organizations

The French influence on American agriculture was more or less indirect and chiefly in the field of social theory and agricultural practice. The social theorists, such as Francois Quesnay, argued for a better public appreciation of farmers' needs; their economic theories, especially those of the Physiocrats, were particularly favorable to agricultural interests.²³ But of equal significance, though not so much discussed, were the forms of organization that developed among the sturdy French peasants.

1. MUTUAL AID. The first organizations among farm people in France were started as local mutual-aid societies. Whenever one of the poorer members of the neighborhood or society fell sick or met with an accident, the other members would each, in turn, do a day's work for him on his farm or holding. The mutual-aid societies, the fertilizer purchasing groups, and other organizations have since developed into quite powerful agricultural syndicates.²⁴ From the very outset the syndicates had no right either to buy or sell anything; they were merely leagues to defend the interests of agriculturalists. Only gradually did they become economic societies which bought and sold goods for their members.

2. EDUCATION AND COOPERATION THROUGH THE SYNDICATES. The agricultural syndicates, together with the agricultural teaching service which soon developed, are the parents of the agricultural cooperative movement of France. "The agricultural teaching service may be taken to include all the staffs of the long-established agricultural schools as well as those of the more recent regional and department agricultural offices dating from 1919. They command the respect of the farmer. . . .

"The . . . agricultural syndicates . . . gave the French agriculturalist an instrument of collective action which could be put to the most varied uses. . . . It always provided a sounding board for new ideas, whether they were embodied in the commands of the state or the persuasion of individuals. It also provided machinery,

²³ Paul H. Johnstone, "Old Ideals Versus New Ideas in Farm Life." Washington, D. C.: Yearbook of Agriculture, USDA, 1940, page 113.

²⁴ "Yearbook of Agricultural Cooperation." *Op. cit.*, page 237.

both local and national, whereby such ideas could be expeditiously put into practice."²⁵

Pre-Soviet Rural Organization in Russia

The collectivization of farmers in Russia has its interest to American farmers because of its use of systems of organization and cooperation which developed previous to Sovietization. Very little is known among American farmers of the present system of collectivization; the little that is known is generally to the discredit of the Russian system in the eyes of the individualistic and independence-loving farmer of the United States. Yet rural organizational forms did begin to develop in Russia previous to the present regime.

1. THE EDUCATION OF PEASANTS. The apparent success of the Soviet collective system has deep roots in a social organization formerly developed among the peasants which was under way long before the Soviet system was conceived. The Soviet system was superimposed upon a widespread development of local units of cooperatives all over the country. Previous to this there had been a widespread education of the peasant in the meaning of cooperation.²⁶

Credit cooperation in Russia, for example, has followed the same general pattern as that developed in Germany in the late Nineteenth Century. The members of credit societies were generally owners of from 5 to 13 acres of land. The rural village usually formed the center of their activities. These cooperatives performed a great variety of functions in addition to that of lending money.²⁷

2. COOPERATION AS A MEANS OF EMANCIPATION. Other types of cooperatives came into being in various parts of the country, slowly at first, then more rapidly as the peasants found a new type

²⁵ Yearbook of Agricultural Cooperation, 1938. London: P. S. King & Co., Ltd., pages 315 to 316.

²⁶ Elsie Terry Blanc, "The Cooperative Movement in Russia." New York: The MacMillan Company, 1924. *passim*.

²⁷ George Pavlovsky, "Agricultural Russia." London: G. Routledge & Sons, 1930, page 232.

of emancipation through them.²⁸ Agricultural societies, which were of earlier origin and development than the cooperatives, had a great deal to do with the educational process among farmers through research, exchange of information and social activity. The great bulk of them were small, their activities being limited to their own neighborhoods.²⁹

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL GROUP ORGANIZATION. In general, the local groups and their organization among farmers in Russia had provided the peasant, "as a member of his own cooperative society, an equal voice with his fellows in the control of his own business, from which he also (secured) the full value of his products sold without toll of profit for capitalist or state."³⁰ This is the significant thing for American farmers: they must be ever alert that their local units of organization—those which are close to the man on the land—are kept active and virile.

Rural Organizations in England

Colonial and revolutionary America were part and parcel of Old England, so far as systems of social organizations among farmers were concerned. In that early day America was predominantly rural; most of its leaders came from an agricultural background, either farmers, landed proprietors, or townsmen with rural backgrounds and an active interest in agriculture. Of chief influence were the "gentlemen farmers" who made themselves heard through their agricultural societies.

Patterns of settlement in the new world were profoundly affected by changes in the mother country. The manorial system and other forms of social organization kept control in the hands of the large landholders. The efforts on the part of small English farmers to free themselves from this domination were more or less unavailing; the desire for such freedom was carried over and found expression in the New World, as will be seen later.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, page 239.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, page 24.

³⁰ G. Ratner, "Agricultural Cooperation in the Soviet Union." London: G. Routledge & Sons, 1930, page 59.

1. RESISTANCE TO PARISH DOMINATION. The English parish, a form of social organization which has integrated banking, trading, shipping, religion, education, politics, and similar activities has persisted, beginning with the time when the church and state jointly assumed the task of governing the English people. This traditional form of social organization has taken deep root. Prior to about 1885 certain parish squires (political and religious leaders) had come pretty largely into control; quite often they were landlords and money lenders. Consequently they tried to keep the farmers from forming their own local organizations. These obstacles were so deep seated that agricultural leaders and social reformers had to get legal sanction for many of the changes that were needed.³¹

2. THE DISPOSSESSION OF THE PEASANTS. The manorial system of rural organization was followed until the time of the Norman conquest. In this hierarchy the lords were the virtual owners of the land; the yeomen or "freemen" were rewarded for service as warriors with grants of land or "by fealty and money rent or homage and fealty without rent";³² the "villeins" were bound to the soil to support the lords but held some land from which to support their families; the cottagers held only small parcels of land in permanent tenure and were also bound to the lords and the soil. With the rise of industrial society and the Black Death of 1349, many villages and lands were deserted and fell into the hands of the lords.

The first agrarian revolution from 1400 to 1600 started the movement toward enclosures, the decay of the village, and the dispossession of the peasants. The second agrarian revolution from 1700 to 1850 established the Latifundia. Scientific agriculture arose; farming became commercialized; landlords suppressed the tenants; small holders were bought out, dispossessed, or forced out; and village life in rural England all but disappeared.³³

³¹ Terpenning, *op. cit.*, page 134.

³² Sims, *op. cit.*, page 35.

³³ Sims, *op. cit.*, pages 32-42.

3. CHANGE IN PARISH ORGANIZATION. About 1685, the political control of the English parish changed. Parliament transferred the management of county affairs from the justices of the peace, who before this time were the oligarchs of the parishes, to elected county councils, district councils, and parish meetings. "The power remained, and still remains, in the hands of the same group of landlords, large farmers, land agents, solicitors, bankers, dealers and middlemen." This group "gripped the countryside through its hold on land, on the homes, on the lives and labor of the people, on money and the business side of agriculture, and also to a large extent its representation in Parliament and local government."³⁴ With such an intermixture of interests in agriculture and with the balance of control—financially, economically, and governmentally—in the hands of the landowning, absentee classes, little group effort has resulted, in spite of the fact that sympathetic leaders and agricultural reformers have tried to bring cooperation to the forefront.

4. FRIENDLY SOCIETIES AND FARMERS' CLUBS. Friendly societies, which, under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1862, could carry on any business but banking, started as mutual-aid societies for succor to the sick and distressed. In them, the English farmer has come to find an avenue of escape from the tradition-dominated system of parish social organization. Some clue to the influence this type of agricultural organization in England had on the pre- and post-Revolutionary New World is found in the writings of Jonathan Periam. "Farmers' clubs . . .," he writes, "are no 'new invention,' but have the venerable age of a full century and a half. In 1723, there was established, in Scotland, a society to which its founders gave the name of 'Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture.' It became extinct in 1755, but was succeeded by another, which was merged into the 'Highland Agricultural Society.' This association, in 1787 received a royal charter, and in 1834, it was re-chartered. Annual fairs were thenceforward

³⁴ Fordham, Montague, "The Rebuilding of Rural England." London: Hutchinson & Co., 1924, page 16.

held, at each of which premiums were given to the amount of £10,000.

"In Ireland, an agricultural society was established in 1747. From the influence exerted by the members of this organization many others sprang up in various parts of the island, which were productive of great benefit, not only among the aristocratic landed gentry, for whom all these earlier organizations were instituted, but also among the small proprietors and tenant farmers, and, indirectly, among the laborers themselves."³⁵

5. AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES. The Bath Agricultural Society of England was formed in 1777, "having for its aim the encouragement of agriculture, arts, manufactures, and commerce, in the counties of Somerset, Wilts, Gloucester, and Dorset."³⁶ The transactions of this society for the year 1810 reveal 81 agricultural societies in regular working order. One of them, the Badenach and Strathspey Society, had a woman for its president.

"The Royal Agricultural Society . . . was founded in 1838, and adopted for its motto, 'Practice with Science.' Within seven years it had established, or had been the means of establishing, four hundred other societies; 150 of these being practical Farmers' Clubs. Ten years later, (in 1855) the societies and clubs amounted to over seven hundred. . . .

6. COUNTY ORGANIZATION. "In most of the counties of England there are County Agricultural Societies, which also hold annual exhibitions . . . but, now, the recognized representatives of the farming interests are the Chambers of Agriculture, composed of landlords, farmers, grain merchants, and others concerned in interests connected with the soil.

"There is a Central Chamber, subordinate to which are County Chambers; and these, in turn, are the superiors of the local or district Chambers. These organizations are of quite recent growth, and the interest taken in them is immense."³⁷

³⁵ Periam, Jonathan, "The Groundswell." Cincinnati: E. Hannaford & Co., 1874, page 51.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, page 52.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pages 54-55.

7. THE UNIONIZATION OF FARM LABOR. The small farmer and the farm laborer in England were faced with hardship and were being forced out by large landholders. Farm laborers in the British Isles, therefore, were forced to organize in their own interest. Demands for weekly half-holidays were the rallying point for laborers to form unions, such as those in Scotland following World War I.³⁸ Moreover, many English farmers in the earlier period migrated to Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South America and the United States to "seek that subsistence which unjust laws and extortionate landlords deny them at home."³⁹

8. THE SACRIFICE OF HUMAN TO MONEY VALUES. The story of the four centuries from the time of the beginning of the enclosures to the present is one of technical progress, for the landlords had leisure and money with which to carry on experiments. "But it is also the story of a peasantry without land, of town and country separated into water-tight compartments, a system of international barter instead of self-sufficiency, and money values set above the human values of the good life."⁴⁰ It remained for the World War II period to set in motion a governmentally-directed organization which brought the farming class back into prominence again.

9. WARTIME ORGANIZATION. England is a country of relatively small farms: 300,000 of the 370,000 in England and Wales do not exceed 100 acres; 225,000 do not exceed 50 acres. Due to the dire need for food in the World War II period these farmers were placed under a system of organization which, largely by voluntary action, increased Britain's agricultural production approximately 70 per cent over the pre-war level. To achieve this end a War Agricultural Committee was formed for every county. The chairman of each of these committees was selected by the Minister of Agriculture. "The Chairmen were selected for their quality of leadership and for being good, sensible, all-round men

³⁸ Joseph F. Duncan, "Agriculture and the Community." London: International Bookshops, Ltd., 1921, page 2.

³⁹ Periam, *op. cit.*, page 57.

⁴⁰ Laurence F. Easterbrook, "British Agriculture." New York: British Life and Thought: No. 16, Longmans Green & Co., 1944, pages 11 and 12.

who would be given the confidence of the countryside.”⁴¹ They were appointed rather than elected because the job they had to do in the stress of wartime made it necessary that they not be dependent upon anyone’s vote.

The committees in the counties were representative of land-owners, farmers and farm workers, with the farmers, who would be the recipients of the Committee’s orders, very strongly represented; and they were responsible to the Minister of Agriculture and through him to Parliament and to the nation. In order to provide effective contact with every farmer, the county committees formed district or community committees, each being responsible for about 5,000 acres of land or about 8 square miles. By education and persuasion, backed by the force of law, this decentralized system of social organization, administered by people who knew local conditions and local people, and in whom farmers had confidence, succeeded in the task of leading British farmers to bring about the miracle of agricultural production so essential to Britain’s welfare in the dark years of the war and in the years of their aftermath.

10. POSTWAR POSSIBILITIES. The County Agricultural Committees probably will be continued in the peacetime period in the British Isles, but in a modified form. “Their task will be to see that the land is properly farmed, to spread knowledge and education, and generally act as the nation’s stewards for the agricultural part of the state.”⁴² “We believe that an agriculture based upon the care of the soil, sustained by prices that ensure to the efficient farmer a fair reward, and inspired by a spirit of service to the land and to those who look to it for their daily bread, can create the good life. We look to it to breed men and women of character and skill as the most important of all that it produces.”⁴³

Summary

In Europe the reorganization of agriculture, in which rural organizations have played an important part, has had widespread

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, page 25.

⁴² *Ibid.*, page 46.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, page 48.

results. Cooperative organization for buying and selling had its beginnings in other forms of organization—in most cases, local group organizations. Many cooperatives, began as mutual-aid activities in the locality and spread, with the stimulus of social reformers, to all parts of the continent.

Educational processes, which were prerequisite to actual economic cooperative effort, were aided by rural organizations. From original group efforts which formed the laboratories for cooperation, leaders—both professional and lay—learned the lessons necessary to enable them to help other groups organize.

Organizers in other countries, especially the United States with its population increase due to immigration from Europe, have found fertile ground for the study of various forms of rural organization. The effort has been to take the best results of the foreign experiences and adapt them to conditions in their own country.

Immigrants who came from localities in which rural organizations functioned, naturally carried recollections of their experiences into their new environments. Many, of course, have made little direct use of these experiences, probably because of a consciousness of differences in environments. Although the development of rural organizations in Europe, especially in the western continental countries, has served as a background for the development of rural organizations in countries of the New World, we should not minimize the extensive developments in some of the older countries; nor should we overemphasize the extent of the direct transplanting of patterns.

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why should most of the writings on farmer's organizations of Europe stress the economic aspects?
2. What were the most important factors making possible the success of economic cooperation in Denmark and Sweden?
3. What were the conditions making organization of farmers in Ireland difficult? In what ways were they overcome and what were the results?
4. What are the chief differences in the systems of rural organization in Germany before and after the coming of National Socialism?
5. French farmers could organize only mutual-aid societies at first. In what ways was the situation changed?
6. Why has local organization among farmers in England developed so slowly?
7. What were the chief aims of the early English Agricultural Societies?
8. For what group of people and by whom were these societies organized?
9. How did the kind of organizations developed in England differ from those developing in Denmark?
10. In what ways could European rural organizations have had an influence on rural organizations in the United States?

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. What were the chief contributions of Bishop Grundvig in the Danish co-operative movement? Howe.
2. What was the nature of the credit cooperative movement in Germany; how did village life contribute to its success? Branson.
3. Outline in some detail the workings of the National Socialist system of agricultural organization in Germany. Holt.
4. What was the nature of the agricultural syndicates in France and how were they tied in with the agricultural schools? Yearbook of Agricultural Cooperation, 1930.
5. What was the method and what were the results of efforts to organize lower middle-class farmers in England as described by Fordham?
6. How did Agricultural Societies differ from Farmer's Clubs in England? Periam.
7. Describe the system of Irish rural reconstruction and the place of the agricultural leader in it. Smith-Gordon and Staples.
8. What is the nature of farm labor organization in Scotland and why is it possible for such organizations to be formed? Duncan.
9. Trace the influence of close-knit social organization on the developments in Denmark and Germany. Branson and Terpenning.
10. In what ways were systems of adult education made a part of the systems of rural organizations in Denmark? Howe, Honigsheim.

EXERCISE

Check the nationality groups in the community forming the basis for your study. About what percentage are foreign-born; what percentage native born of foreign parents; and what percentage are third and fourth generation? Describe the organizational efforts or the attitudes of the people which may be traceable to the foreign-born or their progenitors.

CHAPTER V

AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES AND FARMERS' CLUBS

American farmers, in the main, have chosen to form organized activities to meet a need or a situation; European farmers, on the other hand, were driven by force of circumstances to find a way out by mutual efforts. Early movements for organization in America began with the prominent men and generally had a select and limited membership drawn from the ranks of "wealthy proprietors and distinguished intellectuals and political figures."¹ Those in Europe had their roots in the neighborhood or community and among the dispossessed, as we have seen; later efforts in America, also, were among and on behalf of the rank and file of farmers, as we shall see.

Influences of Early Organizational Efforts

Early agricultural writers and journalists placed a great deal of faith in the work of agricultural societies, fairs, farmers' clubs, and similar groups in advancing agricultural techniques and in freeing farmers from domination and exploitation by other groups. With the broadening of the base of agricultural societies, the growth of fairs, agricultural journals and farmers' clubs, farmers' movements arose in which the farmers' clubs, particularly, and general farmers' organizations and farmers' cooperatives played the major role. Their activities were publicized in a widespread manner by the agricultural journals, and the editors of these journals were often found among the leaders of the former movements.

Many of these groups and the movements resulting, once renowned for their intense activity, have become inactive, but have left their impress on legislation affecting farm life and present-day types of organizations and institutions in rural life, as well as upon the attitudes of farm people. The chief forms still functioning are the specialized societies growing out of the agricultural societies,

¹ Paul H. Johnstone, *op. cit.*, pages 114 and 115.

the general farmers' organizations, such as the Grange, and the cooperatives: grain, livestock, fluid milk, and others.

Eras of Organizational Effort

Historically, four major eras of organizational effort in America can be described: (1) the colonial era, marked by the direct influence of the mother countries; (2) the pre-Civil War era, marked by the growth of agricultural societies, fairs, farmers' clubs and boards of agriculture; (3) the era of farmers' movements following the Civil War; (4) the modern era beginning with the turn of the Century. The present chapter will deal briefly with the periods before the Civil War and their influences upon modern-day farmers' and rural organizations; later chapters in this section will deal with the other periods.

Significant Emphases in the Colonial Era

We have seen that a number of evidences of the influence of rural organizations in Europe on those in the United States can be found in much of the literature that deals with the subject. The most direct influence resulted from migration. Many evidences can be found of English leadership, organization, and government in early colonial writings on agriculture, particularly relative to production practices, settlement and leadership.

1. EMPHASIS ON PRODUCTION PRACTICES. Considerable attention was given to crop improvement; for example, the introduction of new varieties and enterprises was encouraged by governmental edict: As early as 1622, James I encouraged the colonists to breed silkworms. By 1656, every landowner in Virginia was required to "plant 10 mulberry trees for every 100 acres he possessed."² John Winthrop, a member of the Royal Society of England and Governor of Connecticut in 1655, carried on experiments in the New World, and the Royal Society published the results. William Penn was a leader in agricultural advancement; and his secretary, James Logan, was the first scientific agriculturist in the new country. He

² Alfred Charles True, "A History of Agricultural Experimentation and Research in the United States, 1607-1925." Washington, D. C.: U. S. Gov't. Printing Office, 1937, page 1.

first recorded how the grain of maize resulted from the union of the pollen of the tassel with the silk of the ear.

New methods that were tried in New World soils were described in proceedings of agricultural societies in England; and grants, prizes, and premiums were awarded for growing new crops, such as indigo; for controlling diseases, such as wheat rust; and for developing botanical gardens, such as the one established near Philadelphia in 1728 by John Bartram, who was induced to do so by Peter Collinson of London.³

2. INFLUENCE OF TYPES OF SETTLEMENT. The settling of English, German, Swedish, Dutch, French, Danish, and Irish people on the land had a great deal to do with the early forms of settlement and the methods used in agriculture. Types of rural settlement in the Old World, evidences of which could be found in the United States in the early days, include the following:

a. The early agricultural village and town characterized the early New England settlements. "From the peasant and yeoman class the colonists of New England were largely recruited."⁴ They naturally reverted to the old English village type of organization. "New York, under the Dutch and the tidewater areas of the South, on the other hand, were selected as sections into which the manorial systems of the mother countries might be transplanted."⁵ New York was soon taken over by the small holders; thus, the aristocratic system did not become widely perpetuated or carried westward to any great extent.

b. The plantation system developed largely in the South. "Many large estates were granted and a considerable number of the aristocracy laid the foundation for the plantation system which played such a conspicuous role in the history of southern society."⁶

c. The scattered farmstead characterized the rural communities of the Middlewest and became the predominant form of land settlement in the United States. This form of organization had its

³ *Ibid.*, pages 48-49.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pages 2 and 3.

⁵ Sims, *op. cit.*, page 49.

⁶ Smith, *op. cit.*, page 48.

counterpart in the Old World but, because of the conditions under which it developed, was peculiarly American. In the New World, the system followed rapidly in the wake of government surveys and provided the setting in the mile-square sections for the settlement of sections, half-sections, and quarter-sections. The scattered farmstead type of settlement has had profound effects upon the development and success of farmers' organizations in the United States.

3. INFLUENCE OF "GENTLEMEN" FARMERS. In the 168 years before the Revolutionary War, most of the interest in agricultural organization was centered in the Mother Country; the "gentlemen" farmers of the colonies kept in close touch with the societies in England, many of them retaining or securing membership in them. The chief interest was in carrying on experiments in soil improvement, crop varieties, and the breeding of livestock and publishing results of these experiments in publications of English agricultural societies.

Agricultural Societies in the Pre-Civil War Era

Though the patterns for the organization of agricultural societies had been set in colonial times, it was after the Revolution that groups of men interested in the improvement of agriculture began to get together and discuss ways and means for promoting this improvement.⁷ A review of the objects and activities of early agricultural societies reveals that (1) they encouraged experimentation, (2) they were made up of urban dwellers, large-scale farmers, and planters, and (3) they were largely state-wide in nature.⁸

1. THE FOUNDATION OF AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES. The early societies had among their leading members such men as George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Timothy Pickering. Their efforts were not well received by farmers generally. "At first these societies were ridiculed by the practical farmers; but it was soon discovered that their transactions contained much valuable infor-

⁷ True, *op. cit.*, page 6.

⁸ Edward Wiest, "Agricultural Organization in the United States." Lexington: Uni. of Kentucky, 1923, page 333.

mation.”⁹ During this time, “the farmer who ventured to make experiments, to strike out new paths of practice, or to adopt new modes of culture, ‘subjected himself to the ridicule of the whole neighborhood.’ Crops were planted during full moon. ‘The rotation of crops was almost unknown; the value of manures was little regarded; labor-saving implements were never thought of, and the undersized horses, cattle, and sheep were so badly cared for during the winter that they cast but faint shadows in the spring.’ The cast-iron mould board of the plough had not yet been in general use. The farmers were slow to adopt its use and continued to use wooden ploughs plated with wrought iron. They feared the new iron plough would poison their crops.”¹⁰

2. AREAS OF EARLY ORGANIZATION. The earliest societies were formed in Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina. They varied, however, in membership and nature from area to area:

a. One of the earliest societies formed by “dirt” farmers in America was the Kennebec Society, which was founded in Maine in 1787. It encouraged the importation of pure-bred stock and the use of improved implements and the best available seeds. It met regularly to read and discuss papers bearing on agriculture and thus followed the pattern of societies in England.

b. One of the oldest types of societies was the horticultural societies, such as the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, which was organized in 1829 with 160 members and which had a membership of 1,000 by 1875.¹¹

c. The formation of agricultural societies was not limited to the east coast. A state horticultural society was organized in Indiana in 1842. The Illinois Northwestern Fruit Growers' Association was formed in 1851. In Wisconsin, members of the legislature, leading farmers, stock raisers, and other prominent farmers of the state formed the Wisconsin State Agricultural

⁹ *Ibid.*, page 334.

¹⁰ Wiest, *op. cit.*, page 334.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, page 337.

Society in 1851. In 1847, Ohio organized a temporary pomological association which was made permanent in 1852. In Michigan, the first society was organized in 1830, and the first attempts at organization in Minnesota were made in 1852. Kansas organized a society in 1862 and Oregon, in 1861.¹²

3. PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OF EARLY SOCIETIES. In South Carolina the Society for Promoting and Improving Agriculture and Other Rural Concerns, which was organized in 1784, recommended that the planter *experiment* on small plots of ground by various methods. The Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture which was organized in 1785, offered *premiums* for records of actual experience in testing various farm practices. A plan for a state society for promoting agriculture was presented in 1794 and included in its purposes the establishment of "*pattern farms*" in different parts of Pennsylvania. The New York Society for the Promotion of Agriculture, Arts, and Manufactures, which was formed in 1791, proposed to *encourage investigations* on or experiments with such things as marl, gypsum, seaweed, fish, etc., as fertilizers on various kinds of crops. The Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture, which was incorporated on March 7, 1792, encouraged new experiments and considered "the expediency of *procuring a piece of ground* for the purpose of agricultural experiments"¹³ as early as 1794 and, in 1801, subscribed \$500 for the establishment of a *professorship* in natural history at Harvard College. The Society for Promoting Agriculture in the State of Connecticut, which was formed in 1794, encouraged its members to carry on experiments and record the results.¹⁴ These were patterns for later experimentation, encouragement to research, teaching and demonstration in agriculture.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF BOARDS OF AGRICULTURE. Some of the Agricultural societies in this period were constituted by legislation as state boards of agriculture. The Agricultural Society of Georgia, which was organized in 1810, was responsible for the passage of the

¹² *Ibid.*, pages 344-349 .

¹³ True, *op. cit.*, pages 8 and 9.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

act establishing a Board of Agriculture and Rural Economy of the State of Georgia in 1837.¹⁵ A State Board of Agriculture was also established in Michigan in 1861, but it was affiliated with the state agricultural college.

5. EFFORTS AT REGIONAL ORGANIZATION. A society spreading across state lines was organized in Maryland and Virginia and the District of Columbia in 1843. The work of the society was fostered by the President of the United States and by his Cabinet members. The society began at once to hold fairs which were probably the first important fairs in the United States.

6. MOVEMENTS FOR FEDERAL SUPPORT. In the late 1830's, when the building of railroads began, agricultural organization felt the stimulus of intellectual and industrial development. In 1826 James Smithson bequeathed his fortune to found an institution for the "increase and diffusion of knowledge among men." The fund was eagerly sought by agriculturists. In 1841, a convention was held in Washington to organize a national agricultural society and to use some of these funds for the promotion of agriculture.¹⁶

As early as 1796, George Washington recommended that Congress create an Agricultural Board. A Congressional Committee to which the matter was referred recommended the creation of the American Society of Agriculture.¹⁷ But no definite action was taken. However, a Committee on Agriculture was set up in the House in 1820 and a similar committee in the Senate in 1825. Nevertheless, nothing was done toward creating a national agricultural society until after the Patent Office was established.

On December 15, 1841, a meeting of friends of agriculture was held which resulted in the organization of the Agricultural Society of the United States. It had for its objects "to improve the condition of American husbandry and from its central position to serve as a medium of communication and of action with other agricultural societies throughout the Union."¹⁸ Although \$1,000 had

¹⁵ Wiest, *op. cit.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, page 342.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, page 343.

¹⁸ True, *op. cit.*, page 25.

been appropriated for agricultural investigation and promotion in 1839, no money was made available in the following five years. The National Society languished. However, a second Convention of Agricultural Societies was called in 1844 attended by 152 delegates from 23 states and territories. The Society was incorporated in 1860 and became very active; for some years it served the purposes of a National Board of Agriculture. It was merged into the U. S. Department of Agriculture when the latter was established in 1862.¹⁹

Present-Day Functions of Agricultural Societies

Most of the early societies were of a general character and were operated on a county or state basis. These groups communicated, exchanged, and recorded the results of their experimentation with new practices and, in general, tried to improve agricultural conditions.

1. CHANGE TO SPECIALIZATION. After the general societies came the specialized societies, the first being the horticultural societies, as in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania and later in Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois. Then came wool growers' associations as in Ohio in 1864, and Missouri and Kansas in 1874 and next, dairy associations as in Vermont in 1869, New York in 1877, Illinois in 1874, and Minnesota in 1877. The National Dairy Union was organized in 1891. Corn, rice, fruit, nut, forage, and cotton associations have since been formed. Livestock associations have become numerous, consisting of swine, cattle, sheep, goat, horse, poultry, rabbit, and bee associations. Many of these societies have divided so as to represent the interests of particular breeds. As a result, the old agricultural societies have disintegrated.²⁰

2. THE FUNCTIONS OF MODERN SOCIETIES. The development of the specialized societies followed specialization in agriculture. The newer societies centered their interests upon one object in which all the members had a common interest. Many of the specialized groups also served to advertise the products of the group. In general, the functions of the specialized groups are (1)

¹⁹ Wiest, *op. cit.*, page 343.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pages 349-355.

to educate the members, (2) to advertise the products of their members, (3) to center public attention upon the problems of the specialized growers, and (4) to create the medium for meetings of members through annual and other gatherings. These societies have also had a great deal to do with the creation and the work of State Boards of Agriculture, the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and the Agricultural Experiment Stations.²¹

Pre-Civil War Origins and Features of the Agricultural Fair

One of the principal outgrowths of agricultural societies was the agricultural fair. The character of the first fairs in the United States was more English than American.

1. THE FIRST AMERICAN FAIRS. The "father of the agricultural fair" as an American institution was Elkanah Watson, who in 1807 exhibited two merino sheep in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, and who in 1810 organized the farmers in his community into the Berkshire Agricultural Society for the purpose of holding fairs. He was also active in assisting in the organization of fair associations in ten other States. During the first half of the 19th century farmers' club and agricultural societies, organized for the purpose of holding fairs and also for educational purposes, prepared the way for the 'golden age of the agricultural fair' which is said to have reached from 1850 to 1870.²² The Columbia Society of Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia held one of the earliest important fairs.

2. FEATURES OF EARLY FAIRS. At first, fairs were held only on market days after the English fashion, but later exhibitions were combined with livestock auctions. Premiums were given for the best exhibits and for the best written essay, for example, on the mode of "gearing and working oxen, founded on experiments."²³ Premiums were offered, likewise, for the best methods to destroy the cankerworm, for the best compost heap of manure from the common materials of the farm, for the most thrifty trees from seed,

²¹ *Ibid.*, pages 355-358.

²² *Ibid.*, pages 358-359.

²³ *Ibid.*, page 340.

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²¹ *Ibid.*, pages 355-358.

²² *Ibid.*, pages 358-359.

²³ *Ibid.*, page 340.

and "for accurate analyses of the constituent parts of several fertile soils, respectively so of poor soils, and how, by actual experiment, to remedy the evils, so that it can be practiced by common farmers."²⁴

Agricultural societies and fairs had multiplied and spread, until at the end of the period there were few of the States and Territories, "which are destitute of more or less organizations of this character. These hold annual fairs, and distribute large amounts in premiums yearly, embracing the entire scope of agricultural and horticultural art, and domestic manufactures."²⁵

Pre-Civil War Farmers' Clubs and Conventions

Farmers' clubs, unlike agricultural societies, developed on a local basis rather than on a county or state basis and were particularly active in the Middlewest immediately prior to and following the Civil War. They provided a pattern for the local structure of the farmers' organizations which came later. They were neighborhood groups which gave the farmers (the whole family) the opportunity to discuss their every-day problems. They were also an important socializing medium, for they brought farm families of all creeds, nationalities, and political affiliations together on common ground.²⁶

1. THE PATTERN OF EARLY ORGANIZATION. It was difficult in those days for farmers to get together, and when they did they were "prevented from organizing clubs for the reason that they are not conversant with the mode of organization." The first clubs, therefore, followed simple rules: "Any number of individuals, male and female (and in the organization of social clubs it has been found necessary to perfect success that both sexes participate), may meet together and agree upon the time and place for meeting."²⁷ Most of the groups provided a simple lunch. The

²⁴ Periam, "The Groundswell," *op. cit.*, page 69.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, page 71.

²⁶ D. E. Lindstrom, "Rural Life and the Church." Champaign, Ill.: Garrard Press, 1946, page 96.

²⁷ Periam, *op. cit.*, page 94.

gatherings were informal and conversational at first, "principally devoted to social chat upon the prospects of the crops, the probable yield, prices, and arrangements for mutual assistance in gathering and marketing, and the discussion of some general plan of cooperation."²⁸ Some musical talent, extemporaneous addresses, reports of essays, and debates connected with agriculture and its problems were included in the program. Most groups adopted a simple, yet comprehensive constitution providing for standing committees of three to five persons appointed on the most important subjects, such as, soils, grasses and pastures, grains, fruits, domestic animals, and library facilities.²⁹ Later, when the farmers began to discover that they had grievances, cooperation was developed between the clubs by electing delegates to a state convention, these delegates, in turn, electing delegates for national conventions.

The above pattern of organization, followed by many clubs, was adapted to other groups in the following turbulent years partly because it carried over into the constitutions adopted by numerous clubs at the time. It was the pattern for a "form of Illinois Farmers' Clubs' Constitution" as adopted by the Illinois Farmers' Association; it provided that:

"I. This organization shall be known as the.....Farmers' Club.

"II. Its objects shall be improvement in the theory and practice of Agriculture and Horticulture; to promote the moral, intellectual, social, and pecuniary welfare of its members, and by active and cordial co-operation with other Clubs, and with its County Committee, to assist in carrying to a successful issue the object of the State Association.

"III. Its members, other than the original ones, shall be elected by ballot, and all members shall be subject to pay an initiation fee of \$....., and, thereafter, such sums as shall be necessary to defray the expenses of the Club.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pages 94-95.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pages 94-97.

"IV. Its officers shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, and Treasurer, who shall jointly constitute the Executive Committee, and shall be elected annually.

"V. Its meetings shall be held monthly, and at such other times as the President may deem necessary for the good of the society.

"VI. This Club shall become auxiliary to the County Association, whenever it shall be formed.

"VII. This Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting, by a two-thirds vote of the members present, said amendment having been proposed in writing at a previous meeting."³⁰

2. THE PROGRAM OF EARLY FARMERS' CLUBS. Growing out of the above pattern of organization, the programs of most of the clubs had the following characteristics: (1) They were primarily social, bringing the neighborhood's farm men and women together. Such gatherings led to "elevating the status" of the farm people. (2) They were the nucleus for the formation of agricultural societies to encourage every farmer to collect facts, to record them, and to compare them with facts collected by government agencies. (3) They provided for the discussion of all issues of concern to farmers, keeping all farmers abreast of the times and thus able to check legislation and legislators. "This would be one way to make and keep legislators honest."³¹ (4) They made it possible to buy and sell and through banding together, they secured savings not possible otherwise. "Suppose the Club, containing twenty to fifty members, intends to sell a certain amount of produce, for the purchase of necessary stores. The families represented in the Club require annually from fifty to one hundred dollars worth of dry goods and groceries each, according to size. The individual can not get as good a price on two to three hundred bushels of corn . . .

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pages 99-100.

³¹ *Ibid.*, page 108.

as he who has from twenty to fifty times this quantity to dispose of at once. . . . Accounts are opened with the grain merchant, the produce commission man, the cattle broker, etc., unless the respective dealers in the village or town consider it to their interest (which they soon come to do) to buy this property, and give cash in return, or such articles as may be wanted at fair prices. If not, the agent appointed makes the best terms he can for transportation, and sells in the best market he can find, buys the stores, and distributes to the several individuals of the Club." ³²

3. BEGINNINGS OF FARMERS' CONVENTIONS. The earliest concerted farmers' movement for redress of wrongs, economic or social, is generally believed to have arisen in the East immediately following the Civil War. As early as 1848, however, farmers' clubs in the Middlewest began to agitate for redress of wrongs, real and imaginary. "Dating from about the year 1848, there was a general feeling among the farmers throughout Illinois, that they were not receiving the just reward of their labor. The country was settling up, and the cost of transporting produce to St. Louis and Chicago, the principal distributing points, over the common roads was so great that it left the farmer little or nothing to carry back to his family. . . . In 1852, the exactions of the country merchants, or middle men, as they were even then called, came in for a great share of the blame, and justly, beyond a doubt." ³³

With the development of the railroads, agriculture suddenly became remunerative. Towns springing up increased immigration. But soon "rings" were formed to exploit the farmer. These and similar grievances led to the calling of the Centralia Convention in September, 1858. This convention anticipated, by ten years, the start of the Granges and the Granger Movement, and formed the pattern upon which similar conventions were called following the Civil War. In connection with its "demands" which are summarized

³² *Ibid.*, pages 111-112.

³³ *Ibid.*, pages 202-203.

in the following paragraph, it set forth a "Farmers' Platform of 1858" which stressed the supremacy of the producers, the importance of majority rule and the mutual interests of producers and consumers.³⁴

The convention called for more attention to the superior importance of production. It declared that secret cost-marks should not be tolerated; that agriculture and commerce can only be considered identical when each has an equal share in regulating trade; that a national agricultural bureau should be created to make an annual census of all national products and to collect and disseminate valuable seeds, plants, and facts; and that the election of producers to places of public trust and honor should be the rule and the election of nonproducers, the exception.³⁵

The Civil War caused a cessation of these discussions of discontent; for it not only commanded the total energy of all groups, but it also stimulated production, caused trade to flourish, inflated prices, made money plentiful, and brought prosperity to farmers who sold their surplus at good prices. It also brought in an era of speculation of many forms, and this speculation reflected itself later in agricultural conditions.

³⁴ The point stressed in the Platform were:

- a. That producing classes should assert their independence and supremacy; that non-producers cannot be relied upon as guarantors of fairness; and that laws enacted and administered by lawyers are not a true standard of popular sentiment.
- b. That the principle—the majority rule—should be applied to commerce, so as to increase the income and diminish the outlay of producers and to elevate the standard of mercantile morality.
- c. That producers and consumers should be brought as close together as possible so as to diminish the number and power of non-producers.
- d. That union alone can strengthen the isolated condition of farmers so that they will be able to cope with the combinations of nonagricultural interests.
- e. That a good system of commerce transacts the most business with the least tax on production; that it acts merely as a servant—not as a master.
- f. That good prices are as necessary to farm prosperity as good crops; that farmers must keep out of debt; and that they must pay for what they buy and must expect the same from others.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pages 204-206.

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What were the three general types of farmers' organizations which developed in the United States?
2. What were the general periods in which these developments took place?
3. What chief emphases were given previous to the Revolutionary War?
4. Describe briefly the systems of settlement of land which took place in the different sections of the country.
5. How were early agricultural societies similar to and how different from forms in European countries?
6. Make a chronology of the organization of agricultural societies in the United States.
7. What were the main functions of these societies; from what areas were members usually drawn?
8. Into what forms have agricultural societies developed? What influence did they have on the formation of agricultural boards, state and national?
9. Upon what pattern were the first agricultural fairs developed? What chief functions did they perform?
10. What was the nature of the early farmers' club? How did farmers' clubs differ in their organizational structure from agricultural societies?
11. What events led to the amalgamation of farmers' clubs and to the development of state conventions?
12. What were the chief principles set forth by the first farmers' convention?

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. In what ways did early experimental work develop in the Colonies? True.
2. Why did not the village form of settlement persist in the United States? Sims and Smith.
3. In what ways could the scattered-farm-stead type of settlement affect the development of farmer's organizations? Smith.
4. Who were the leaders of early agricultural societies in the United States? Tell something about them. Johnstone.
5. What major event led up to the establishment of the United States Department of Agriculture? True.
6. Make a list of the names, functions, and areas served by present-day forms or organizations growing out of agricultural societies.
7. Compare the nature of early agricultural fairs with those now functioning.
8. What events led up to the calling of the Centennial Convention? Check the items in the demands of the convention which you think formed the basis for grievances to come later from farmer's groups.

EXERCISE

Trace evidences of the activities of the three types of organization just studied—agricultural societies, fairs and farmers' clubs—on the development of organizations in your own community. Talk to some of the older residents in the community or, if your study is of a community on which a study has been made, find library references which may indicate the types of organizations of the above nature which have functioned in or near enough to have some influence on the community. Describe the present-day forms of organization which probably grew out of agricultural societies, fairs, or farmers' clubs in your community. Discuss the extent to which farmers in the community take part in these organizations and what effect you think they have upon the agriculture and the life of the people.

CHAPTER VI

THE GROUNDSWELL AND THE GRANGER MOVEMENTS

The period following the Civil War was marked in its early part (1) by the agitation of farmers of the Middlewest through their farmers' clubs and conventions, (2) by the development of the Grange and the Granger Movement in the east, and (3) by the establishment of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, the Land-Grant Colleges, the Homestead Act, and the Farmers' Institutes.

The latter part of the period, up to the turn of the century, was marked (1) by the formation of farmers' cooperatives, largely stimulated by general farmers' organizations, (2) by the farmer movements of the Middlewest and the far West, culminating in the Populist movement, and (3) by the establishment of agricultural experiment stations.

Agricultural societies, limited as they were to state lines, had become general throughout the country by the time of the Civil War. During the war period, however, many of them ceased operation in the South; and fairs were not held every year in the North and West.

General Conditions Leading to Discontent

"The war brought about a great rise in the general price level due partly to the scarcity of economic goods, but primarily to the issue of greenbacks; and their rapid recovery in value after the Civil War together with the increased production soon caused a decline in the general price level and therefore in the prices of farmers' products."¹ This was the basic cause for discontent. The farmers in different regions of the United States, however, faced conditions peculiar to their own region, and these differences gave rise to inter-regional conflicts. Let us examine briefly, some of these differences:

¹ Wiest, Edward, *op. cit.*, page 365.

1. **THE PROSPEROUS EAST.** Although the northeast diversified farming section was beginning to feel the competition of cheaper production further west through a lowering of land values, it was still relatively prosperous, especially in the 1870's, because of personal thrift, a diversified production, and convenient markets. The same was also true of the New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio region in which the natural process of selection by reason of the westward movement added some effect.

2. **THE EXHAUSTED SOUTH.** The southern states remained producers of staples—cotton, rice, sugar, and tobacco—, but agriculture in this section was well nigh exhausted. An undesirable credit system and excessive attention to the production of cotton was inherited from pre-war days, resulting in credit bondage to the merchant and overproduction of cotton.

3. **THE ONE-CROP SITUATION IN THE MIDDLEWEST.** The Mississippi valley, where the staples were wheat and corn, was the center of agricultural discontent during this period. A great deal of the fault was in the persistence of a one-crop or a cash-crop system. Because wheat prices advanced rapidly during the Crimean and Civil Wars, the farmers of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin placed their faith in it and refused to have it shaken. They fastened the blame of their misfortune on the bankers, the railways, the legislatures, the tariff, and the monopolies; some of their grievances along these lines were well founded.

4. **LAND SPECULATION IN THE FAR WEST.** The situation in the far West was affected by land speculation, large land holdings, distance to market, and development of a grain ring which tampered with grain prices and which led to the farmers' movement, especially in the state of California.²

Specific Causes for Discontent

In this period, nevertheless, the farmers' problems which gave rise to farmers' organizations and farmers' movements centered about transportation, merchandising and manufacturing, credit,

² S. J. Buck, "The Granger Movement." Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1913, pages 3-9.

prices, legislation, and political power. Farmers wanted cheap transportation and a reduction in the cost of handling commodities by middlemen. Railroad transportation expanded rapidly in the period. Loans, donations of bonds, purchases of stock, and grants of land by farmers, towns, counties, states and the Federal government were made to encourage the building of railroads. Farmers often mortgaged their farms to buy shares of railroad stock in the hope of getting means of transportation as well as good returns. Too often the result was not only a heavy mortgage but also worthless railroad stock left in the hands of the farmer. The railroads, moreover, charged what the farmers felt were exorbitantly high rates.

1. GRIEVANCES AGAINST THE RAILROADS. Railroad expansion in the period, as a result, was phenomenal: In 1885 about 12,000 miles of railroad had been constructed; by 1870 this mileage was doubled; by 1880 it had reached 43,000 miles. This increase was accompanied by a rapid movement of population westward: The population in the North-Central division of the United States increased from 9 million in 1880 to 13 million in 1870 and to 17 million in 1880, an increase in 20 years of 91 per cent.

Most of the expansion of westward population was among those engaged in agriculture; two factors made this expansion possible: (1) The accessibility of land. The Homestead law, enacted in 1862, made it possible for each head of a family to obtain free homestead on the public domain. (2) A surplus of industrial population. The depressed conditions of the country meant low wages and unemployment in the cities with a consequent surging of the population to the West.

Prominent among the grievances against the railroads was the uncompromising attitude assumed by the railroad authorities. They shielded themselves behind the Dartmouth College decision, which upheld the claim of the railroads that they were private enterprises and thus not subject to public control, and insisted on managing their businesses as they saw fit. They denied the right of the public, the states, or the nation to regulate or in any way interfere with their operations.

"Complaint was also made of the influence which was exercised by the railroad corporations over legislators and public officials. The most generally prevalent form of this influence was the free pass system (whereby passes would be issued to those legislators thought likely to be favorable to the railroads). But the corporations did not stop with passes; bribery appears to have flourished in more subtle forms, such as the transfer of valuable stock to legislators at a price much below the market value, and that to be paid out of dividends. This was said to be the case in the famous 'Credit Mobilier' scandal in Congress, an investigation of which revealed the purpose of preventing any unfriendly legislation, by distributing stock among members of Congress."³

2. GRIEVANCES AGAINST MIDDLEMEN. The saying, "The farmer accepts what he is paid and pays what is asked," could have originated in this period, for he had little bargaining power. Disbanding armies at the close of the war, and technical and scientific advance, all produced a great increase in the production of staple crops: corn, wheat and cotton. From 1866 to 1880 corn production increased 98 per cent, cotton 171 per cent, and wheat 221 per cent. Conversely, prices suffered, especially from 1866 to 1878: corn declined 32 per cent in price, wheat 49 per cent, and cotton 58 per cent. Thus, many farmers who had assumed a burden of debt to purchase land and machinery were forced to pay exorbitant interest rates while the returns for farm produce declined. Moreover, commissionmen exacted too high rates, retail dealers were few in number and could form combines against the farmer, and manufacturers sold through agents paid commissions which unduly increased prices. They allegedly formed monopolies and kept all the benefits accruing from patents to themselves.

In summary, the following factors aggravated the situation: (1) excessive rates of interest charged for loans and mortgages, running as high as 20 per cent; (2) the spread of loan agents, especially in the far West; (3) a currency which fluctuated; (4) farmers who were in debt getting into still deeper debt; (5) high

³ *Ibid.*, pages 12 and 13.

tariffs when farmers had to sell on a world market; and (6) the heavy burden of taxes, especially upon farm real estate.

3. **THE COMPLAINTS RELATING TO POLITICAL REPRESENTATION.** Political power was shifting. The planters in the South were the controlling element previous to the Civil War, but the manufacturing and commercial classes of the North and East assumed control shortly after the War. But more important for agriculture, they had little representation in Congress: The Congress of 1873-75 was made up of 61 per cent lawyers, 16 per cent commercial and manufacturing men, and only 7 per cent farmers; yet in 1870 almost half of the people of the nation were in agriculture and only 31 per cent in commerce and manufacturing. Farmers thus believed that their interests in legislative matters were neglected, especially with respect to railroads, tariff-making, patents, currency, and banking legislation.⁴

Effects on the Social Position of the Farmers

Due to adverse economic and political conditions and the isolated manner of settlement, making social contacts difficult, the social position of the farmer was impaired. His position relative to other classes was changing.

1. **CHANGE IN ATTITUDES.** Farming, once an honorable calling, came to be looked upon as suitable only for those not equipped to do anything else. Farmers were required to give most of their time to their work and so did not advance socially and intellectually as did other classes. Thus, many farmers made every effort to have their children trained for some other occupation which might give them a chance to rise in the world.

2. **LACK OF EDUCATION.** The only teacher the farmer had was experience; he had but little means of learning about the accumulated experience of his fellows. Colleges of Agriculture were in their infancy. Gifts made by Congress for agricultural education, it was said, had been misapplied to the so-called classical institutions. The agricultural press had not developed. Thus, "not only

⁴ *Ibid.*, pages 24 to 36.

were the farmers deficient in technical education, but as a class they lacked that knowledge of a more general nature which the best interest of their business demanded. . . . Thus what little political influence or power they did possess was largely nullified by their lack of knowledge as to the true interests of agriculture." ⁵

3. THE FEELING FOR NEED OF ORGANIZATION. Many farmers felt the need for organization. Other groups were organized—the manufacturers, the merchants, the bankers, and even the laborers. "The idea of some form of association among the farmers for co-operation in the improvement of their condition, materially, socially, and intellectually, appealed to them in many ways. . . . An agricultural organization including a great part of the farmers of the nation would be able to demand fairer treatment from the railway corporations and to enforce it with the help of the state; it could use its immense influence to secure more favorable legislation on such matters as the tariff, currency, and taxation; by means of a widespread local organization it could gather and disseminate useful information concerning the crops and the markets; and in general it could foster a beneficent spirit of cooperation and mutual assistance among its members." ⁶

Early Movements for Redress of Wrongs

In the early part of the Post-Civil War period several farmers' movements of significance to modern agriculture and rural life took place: (1) The Groundswell; (2) the movement for industrial and agricultural education; (3) the movement in the South; (4) the plains states movements; (5) the movement in the Northeast; and (6) the Granger movement. These preceded and laid the groundwork for the Alliance and similar movements which came later. Of these early movements the Granger movement was probably of greatest significance at the time, though some of the others have had an equally lasting influence.

1. THE GROUNDSWELL OF THE MIDDLEWEST. As was pointed out earlier, the Centralia Convention emphasized the supremacy

⁵ *Ibid.*, page 38.

⁶ *Ibid.*, page 39.

of the producing class and brought up some of the most serious grievances of the farmers at the time. After the war, it was reported that "the encroachments and vexatious discriminations of the transportation companies, grew with the exactions of agents and middle men, the farmers meanwhile steadily growing poorer and poorer."⁷ The chief features of the movement were:

a. *The Bloomington convention as a pattern.* Early in 1869, about the time of the Grange activity in the East, agitation grew in the Middlewest. Local meetings were held, and plans were discussed for a general organization similar to the Trades' Unions, which were obtaining power in England and, to some degree, in the United States. A conference in the nature of a mass meeting was called in Bloomington for April, 1869. Its resolution was sent to the President of the Constitutional Convention, then in session, in which it (1) protested against unfair taxes and railroad rates, (2) urged legal rights to maintain an interest in market and transportation, and (3) asked for the appointment of a state agricultural commission and statistician. A statistician was appointed but no funds were appropriated for his use. The convention succeeded only in developing a pattern for later conventions.⁸

b. *The call to cooperation in the Kewanee convention.* Fifty delegates from widely scattered farmers' clubs and granges met at the request of the Farmers' Club in Kewanee in 1872. It called for (1) a cheapening of the process of transportation; (2) efforts on the part of farmers to form cooperatives; (3) renewed stress on the organization of farmers' clubs; (4) support of granges; (5) means to control Canadian thistles by law; (6) legal review of the railroad law; and (7) the formation of a state committee including one representative from each county. It was characterized as "the most important meeting held up to that time, as far as Western farmers are concerned."⁹

c. *Conventions emphasizing farmers' grievances.* A succession of conventions followed. In January, 1873, a convention of farmers'

⁷ Periam. *Op. cit.*, page 223.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pages 223-230.

⁹ *Ibid.*, page 240.

clubs, and members of granges, horticultural societies, and other agricultural societies met in Bloomington to organize the Illinois State Farmers' Association, to discuss railway abuses and those associated with the sale of agricultural machinery and to protest the exorbitant commission charges for farm products. Boycotting manufacturers of agricultural machinery was urged. In April, 1873, the Illinois Farmers' Association met in Springfield to discuss the railroad situation and vigorously began to reorganize and establish new clubs in the state.

d. *The first call for production control.* The convention called by the association in October, 1873, brought 300 delegates from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, New York, Wisconsin, and Canada. It recommended that "in order to carry out in a practical manner the spirit and letter of cooperation, they (the farmers) will withhold from the market their livestock products until the price shall reach such a figure that the producer shall receive the legitimate returns for the fruits of his labor."¹⁰ The resolution named a price at which pork ought to be sold. Although a Railway Transportation Commission had been appointed in 1871, it had no power, so the convention adopted another resolution to provide the Commission with the power to "prescribe a schedule of reasonable maximum rates of charge for the transportation of passengers and freight."¹¹

e. *Demands for state owned railroads.* Because the Dartmouth College case of 1878 set the precedent that no powers had been reserved by the states to regulate rates, the railroads argued that interference with rates was a violation of freedom of contract which is guaranteed to citizens of the United States under the constitution. Resolutions were also introduced to ask the federal government to build railroads and inland ship canals. "We demand the construction of railroads, and the improvement of water communications, between the interior and seaboard, the same to be owned and operated by the General Government, for the purpose of affording

¹⁰ Wiest, *op. cit.*, page 440.

¹¹ E. R. Johnson and T. W. Van Matre, "Principles of Railroad Transportation," page 476.

cheap transportation, and to protect the people from the exaction of monopolies." ¹²

2. THE MOVEMENT FOR INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION. Even before agitation was well under way for adjustment of farmers' grievances by farmers' clubs of the Middlewest, efforts were being put forth to provide for "the industrial classes what the schools of law, medicine and theology" ¹³ provide for the professional classes. This need was felt especially by such men as J. B. Turner, Bronson Murray, John Gage, Smiley Shepherd, John Davis, and other educators who had been preaching this need for thirty years. The significant features in the movement were:

a. *Discussion and agitation.* For example, agitation led to a convention in Granville, Illinois, in 1851. At this convention, resolutions were passed (1) that industrial classes—farmers, artisans, mechanics, and merchants—should be given privileges for higher education which are equal to those the professional classes enjoy and (2) that since professional schools are not fitted for industrial classes, there be established a university; in addition the convention urged that high schools, lyceums, institutes, etc., be set up in each county. A second convention, called in Springfield in 1852, brought objections from classical and theological colleges to the establishment of an industrial university.

A third convention in Chicago the following year resulted in the formation of an Industrial League of the state and memorialized Congress to obtain land grants for an industrial university.¹⁴

A fourth convention called in Springfield in 1853, memorialized the state legislature, setting forth "facts, figures, and arguments, to show the great need of a thorough and systematic education of the masses to the industries they would follow in after life."¹⁵

b. *Aggressive and persistent leadership.* Especially of note in the leadership of the agitation, was J. B. Turner, who, in 1850, proposed a system of universities for industrial education in all

¹² Wiest, *op. cit.*, page 441.

¹³ Periam, *op. cit.*, page 510.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, page 513.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, page 513.

the states. At the farmers' convention held in Granville he was influential in getting a resolution passed "to take steps towards the establishment of an agricultural university."¹⁶ On February 8, 1853, petitions from Illinois for Land Grant Universities were sent to Congress. "The Illinois State Agricultural Society was incorporated at the same session of the Legislature as the Industrial League. . . . On February 11 a fund of two thousand dollars was appropriated by the Legislature for its use. A committee of the society met in Springfield on March 25, to make plans for the State Fair, which was to be held near that city from the 11th to the 14th of the following October. Professor Turner was invited to deliver the address"¹⁷ In this address, he called attention to the need for a University in Illinois and urged a national appropriation for a University in every state and territory.

c. *Congressional action.* Although several bills had been introduced, only one, the bill introduced by Representative Morrill of Vermont to appropriate public land for agricultural and mechanical education reached the committee stage. It was referred to the Committee on Public Lands rather than to the Committee on Agriculture; consequently, it was reported out adversely. Even so, it passed the House, was reported to and passed the Senate in 1859, but was vetoed by President Buchanan. It was introduced into the Senate again in 1862; this time it passed both Houses and was approved by President Lincoln on July 2 of the same year.¹⁸

It is significant that both the Groundswell movement and movement of industrial and agricultural education of the Middlewest, (1) started with neighborhood groups, called farmers' clubs, as early as 1848; (2) had its influence on bringing about institutions for advanced agricultural education; (3) laid the groundwork for the fight on unjust railroad rates; (4) provided the medium for expression against discrimination by middlemen; (5) continued agitation for a U. S. Department of Agriculture; and (6) pro-

¹⁶ Carriel, Mary Turner, "The Life of Jonathon B. Turner." Urbana, Illinois: Wascher's Binding & Specialty Shop, 1911, page 97.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pages 138-139.

¹⁸ Periam, *op. cit.*, pages 525-526.

vided the framework upon which later movements, such as the Granger movement and particularly the Alliance Movement, could be advanced.

3. **THE MOVEMENT IN THE SOUTH.** Clubs and societies became quite numerous in the South in the early 1870's. These were the nucleus out of which came the following :

a. *Efforts to unite societies.* The Tennessee Agricultural and Mechanics Association held a Congress in Nashville in October, 1871, the purpose of which was to set up a national organization, the National Agricultural Congress. An Agricultural Congress, with delegates from all farmers' clubs and societies of the South was held at Selina, Alabama, in the same year, 1871, to unite agricultural societies, especially those in the South.

b. *Demands for land reforms.* These two associations, together, called the St. Louis Convention in May, 1872. The resolutions passed recommended that "farmers in various districts and townships through the United States . . . organize themselves into clubs and have monthly meetings";¹⁹ that Congress admit certain necessary plant food chemicals free of duty; that trees be planted for shelter belts; and that "railroad companies and settlers hereafter receiving the benefit of the homestead and other acts donating lands, shall plant with timber trees one-tenth of the land so donated."²⁰

c. *Criticisms of instruction in agricultural colleges.* The next convention was held at Indianapolis in 1873 with a large attendance from 25 states. It was reported that 3,000 of the then existing 10,000 clubs and societies were represented. It was voted to meet next in Atlanta in 1874. The problem of making Land Grant Colleges institutions of practical instruction engaged the convention, for it was reported that the professional staff of these institutions tried to construe the Morrill act to mean that it provided for classical instead of agricultural education.

d. *Conditioning for later movements.* By 1879 the movement was changed in name to the Farmers' Congress, meeting in various

¹⁹ Wiest, *op. cit.*, page 434.

²⁰ Periam, *op. cit.*, page 219.

points in the South including Atlanta, Louisville, Nashville, New Orleans, and Washington, D. C. "This continued activity in the South had broken the ground for the Alliance and had prepared the way for rapid progress under the new organizations."²¹

4. A PLAINS STATES MOVEMENT. A similar movement started in Kansas through the Manhattan Farmers' Club, which urged the calling of a convention in Topeka in March, 1873. Delegates from farmers' clubs, granges, and agricultural societies attended. The Farmers' Cooperative Association of Kansas was organized to form local clubs everywhere, to follow the example of combination in industry, and to "fix prices at which its products were to be sold. The 'law of supply and demand,' it was said, 'was obsolete' and . . . 'the prices of iron and other commodities from New York to San Francisco' were fixed through combination."²² Taxation, tariff revision, and transportation also received attention.

5. A MOVEMENT IN THE NORTHEAST. Parallel to the movements in the Middlewest and the South was the formation of the Grain Growers' Transportation and Loan Association in New York for the purpose of financing cheap transportation facilities from the western to the eastern seaboard. It was to sell stock to farmers at \$50 a share, but nothing of importance came of the move.

At another convention of farmers and producers, called in Washington, D. C. the American Cheap Transportation Association was effected; it asked Congress to "enact certain laws for the regulation of railroads, in order to meet such wrongs and avert such dangers as an investigation may bring to light!"²³

6. THE GRANGER MOVEMENT. In the East no such widespread development as that characterized by farmers' clubs was in evidence. Agricultural societies were not class organizations; they did not seek to protect the farmers against the exploitation of other classes. "It is therefore not surprising that a new organization, announcing as its main purpose the protection of the farmers

²¹ Wiest, *op. cit.*, page 443.

²² *Ibid.*, page 444.

²³ *Ibid.*, page 435.

as a class among other economic groups of society, should take root and develop into a powerful national organization. While some of the important purposes of the Grange first in the mind of Kelley (its founder) were the education of its members in the art and science of agriculture, the creation of a social medium for the rural population, and the dissipation of sectional differences between the North and South, the real and large purpose of the organization . . . was to secure to the farmers 'the advantages of cooperation in all things affecting their interests, and of mutual improvement.' " ²⁴

The Grange was one of several organizations which formed a part of the Granger Movement and the Alliance Movement. The result of the adverse economic conditions following the Civil War was the development of this movement of farmers for their economic, social, and political improvement. One of the chief stimuli was the work started or suggested by the Grange founder, who, with some of his associates, started the first grange in Washington, D. C., in 1867.

"When the movement once took hold it spread so rapidly that the order soon became overgrown. The real benefits that were to come from organization were greatly overestimated. Mistakes in aims and purposes, and especially in the disposition of treasury funds, were made in the early days of Grange organization. Between 1875 and 1880 a reaction set in causing a decline in the membership of the Grange, the disorganization of a number of subordinate Granges, and the loss of some state Granges. The fundamental conditions, however, were still ripe for discontent among the farmers." ²⁵

A number of farmers' organizations sprang up from this discontent. The Texas Alliance was organized in 1875, when the Grange was at its height; ²⁶ the Agricultural Wheel, in 1882; the Farmers' National Alliance, in 1880; and the Farmers' Mutual Benefit Association, in 1887.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pages 365-366. See also D. Wyatt Aiken, "The Grange," Booklet No. 8, The National Grange Monthly, Jan. 23, 1883.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, page 372.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, page 373.

a. *The founding of the Grange.* Three men were primarily responsible for the founding of the Patrons of Husbandry, the organization popularly known as the Grange. Oliver Hudson Kelley, who was a native of Boston, who owned a farm in Minnesota, and who was employed in the U. S. Department of Agriculture, formulated the plan in his mind during a trip into the South to collect data on agricultural and mineral resources. He was impressed by the distress of the farmers of the area; and, as a Mason, he discovered the "binding" qualities of this organization between North and South.

Returning to Washington, he sought the counsel of his acquaintances, among them William Saunders, Superintendent of Gardens and Grounds for the Department, and William M. Ireland, Chief of the Finance Bureau of the Post Office Department. Ireland was expert in parliamentary law and journalism and worked out the first constitution and by-laws. Kelley and Ireland together worked out the ritual for the first degree; and Saunders, while on an official trip west, made contact with leaders in Missouri, New York, Ohio, and other states.²⁷ Saunders had prepared for the ministry, was a horticulturist, had outlined a plan for a national farmers' organization in 1855, and contributed considerably to the plan of organization and ritual for the Grange.

Several others were also included among the founders. John R. Thompson from New Hampshire, a clerk in the Treasury Department and a high degree Mason, helped write the ritual and was the first treasurer; Rev. Aaron B. Grosh in the U. S. Department of Agriculture contributed to the ritual, furnished all the prayers, and helped build up the songs for the order; Rev. John Trimble though a critic and adviser, gave his best efforts to the order; Francis M. McDowell, a pomologist at Wayne, New York, gave stability to the financial structure of the order; and Carrie A. Hall, O. H. Kelley's niece, suggested the inclusion of women on an equality with men and acted as Kelley's first secretary after the organization got under way.

²⁷ Periam, *op. cit.*, pages 125-132.

Among the founders, then, were "a propagandist, an organizer, a ritualist, a parliamentarian and journalist, a man of God, a critic, and a financier."²⁸ In this new organization, there were secrecy, a ritual, a place for both men and women, exaltation of agriculture, a binding of all agriculturalists into a single fraternity, dignity, and reverence.

The first order was organized in Washington, D. C., on January 8, 1868, with the motto "Let it endure." Saunders was selected as Master; Thompson, Lecturer; Anson Bartlett of Ohio, Overseer; William Muir of Missouri, Steward; A. S. Moss of New York, Assistant Steward; Grosh, Chaplain; Ireland, Treasurer; Kelley, Secretary; and Edward P. Faris of Illinois, Gatekeeper.²⁹

b. *The spread of the order.* For a time, the Grange at Washington was the only one in existence. Circular letters had been sent, but personal contact was needed to get others organized. Consequently, Kelley agreed to a salary of \$2,000 which was to be paid out of "dispensations" made, to go out early in 1868 to organize granges. The first one that he organized was at Fredonia, New York; the next, which later died, in Ohio; and another, which also died, at Chicago.³⁰

Mr. Kelley then went to his home farm in Minnesota devoid of funds. His niece, Carrie A. Hall, followed him out there. While there he was cheered by news of the organization of a grange at Newton, Iowa. No more granges were organized until September, 1868. Through aid by his niece, who helped him send out literature, and by agricultural journals and local papers, he succeeded in organizing three granges in Minnesota that same year; three, in January, 1869; and the State Grange, the next month. By January, 1870, granges were active in Minnesota (40), Illinois (3), Iowa (3), New York (1), Ohio (1), Pennsylvania (1); by the close of the year, 71 were in existence, with orders in California, Missouri, and Tennessee.

²⁸ Wiest, *op. cit.*, page 378.

²⁹ Periam, *op. cit.*, page 133.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, page 138.

c. *The period of decline.* The high point in grange membership came in 1875, when 858,050 members were reported. After 1875, the number declined very rapidly to about 124,000 in 1880, 111,000 in 1884, and 106,000 in 1889. During this period, the standards of admission were so low that many came in who had no other interest than self-aggrandizement: "Everybody wanted to join the Grange then; lawyers, to get clients; doctors, to get patients; merchants, to get customers; shylocks, to get their pound of flesh; and sharpers to catch the babes in the woods."³¹ Too rapid growth, participation in political movements, failure to accomplish everything hoped for in railroad legislation, and dismal failures of cooperative enterprises contributed to the decline and "to the almost total collapse of the Grange throughout the West."³²

d. *Revitalization through cooperative activities.* The first real impetus to grange organization came as a result of the encouragement of economic as well as social cooperation. Economic cooperation was not accepted at first by the National Grange, though it was urged upon the order by the Minnesota Grange in 1869. By 1874, however, the demand for cooperation had become general among grange members, so much so that the principle of buying together, selling together, and in general acting together for mutual protection and advancement³³ was made a part of the Declaration of Purposes of the National Grange. Although efforts were made to encourage only the simpler forms of economic cooperation, such as buying and selling together under arrangements involving a number of agreements, granges speedily entered the field of cooperation on an extensive and varied scale.

e. *Failures in economic cooperation.* The extensive ventures in cooperation included milling, manufacturing and merchandising. "In West Virginia," for example, "a factory to build reapers and binders was erected. Woolen mills, grist mills, and creameries were built. Mutual fire insurance companies and Grange exchanges were organized. Failures soon beset the movement, and by 1880

³¹ Wiest, *op. cit.*, page 397.

³² Buck, *op. cit.*, page 73.

³³ Wiest, *op. cit.*, pages 403 to 404.

nearly all ventures, except fire insurance, exchanges, and such cooperative methods that merely call for the pooling of orders in the sale and purchase of goods, had closed out, leaving the order in bad repute especially throughout the West and to a lesser extent elsewhere."³⁴ After 1883 only the forms of cooperation that were found could be handled by Granges were recommended. Nevertheless, support of cooperative efforts, especially after the panic of 1893, became a vital part of the work of Granges. These efforts have grown steadily with the Grange ever since.

The work of the granges in the field of cooperation proved invaluable to the development of cooperation in later years, for it showed up mistakes, gave primary impetus to producer rather than consumer cooperation, and helped lay the foundation for the agitation for favorable cooperative legislation in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

f. *Influence on legislation.* (1) Regulation of railroad rates. The Granger movement is probably best known for its influence on railroad legislation. The so-called "Granger Laws" affecting state control over railroad rates came out of the agitation started by the farmers' clubs of the Midwest and were taken up by the rapidly growing grange organization of the early 1870's. These laws "conceived of the railroads as public service cooperations."³⁵ President Grant's message in 1872 voiced the farmers' demands for cheaper rates. A committee was appointed which made a report in 1874 recommending, for example, that no less be charged for shorter than for longer hauls; however, no action was taken until the Interstate Commerce Commission was established in 1887. In the meantime, the Grange was influential in getting state laws enacted which established the principle that a state may regulate railroad rates.³⁶

(2) Influence on agricultural education. The Grange has traditionally encouraged agricultural education. As early as 1880, it sponsored agricultural teaching in public schools.³⁷ Even before

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pages 422-423.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, page 421.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, page 421.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, page 419.

1880, it had taken a great deal of interest in the development of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.³⁸ The New York State Grange supported the establishment of the New York Agricultural Experiment Station, which was established in 1880. The national order continuously supported measures to provide funds for Experiment Stations culminating in the Hatch Act of 1887. On November 18, 1886, it expressed approval to the bill leaving to the option of the various states the decision as to whether the funds should be bestowed upon agricultural colleges, or institutions created especially for this line of work, and it recommended that another amendment be added providing that in any state which does not have an experiment station under state control "and in which agricultural education was neglected by the land-grant college, the Hatch fund should be put under the direction of the State Board of Agriculture and given to an independent experiment station whenever such a station was established."³⁹

(3) Support of a "grassroots" department of agriculture. The Grange was particularly active, also, in elevating the U. S. Department of Agriculture so that its head would be a member of the President's Cabinet. A resolution to that effect was issued from the November, 1876, National Grange meeting. In supporting the measure, however, it opposed adding a Bureau of Labor to the Department because it felt it should be "kept for Agriculture alone."⁴⁰ Moreover, it insisted that the Secretary of Agriculture be a practical farmer and objected to the selection of Jeremiah M. Rusk of Wisconsin in 1889, "who has never been considered a farmer,"⁴¹ and J. Sterling Morton of Nebraska in 1893, who advised that the "most insidious and destructive foe of the farmer is the professional farmer, the promoter of granges and alliances"⁴² and who advised farmers to read Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations" and subscribe to a daily newspaper from a great city. These

³⁸ True, Alfred Charles, "A History of Agricultural Experimentation in the United States," page 56.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, page 128.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, page 176.

⁴¹ Wiest, *op. cit.*, page 412.

⁴² *Ibid.*, page 413.

men became the subject for a stinging rebuke from the Grange. When President McKinley was about to appoint a Secretary, therefore, the Grange insisted that a farmer, one of their members, be appointed and set forth their views as to the proper qualifications of a Secretary of Agriculture.⁴³

(4) Agitation for income taxation. Equitable taxation has always been championed by the Grange. As early as 1880, it favored the income tax. However, it did not accept the single tax of Henry George to tax "the entire yield of land above the cost of operation,"⁴⁴ but voiced its opposition in 1896.

(5) Positions relative to "free silver." The campaign for free silver, culminating in Bryan's defeat in 1896, had the support of the Grange in 1889. The Master of the Grange in 1894, however, made an argument against free coinage of silver.⁴⁵

g. Effect on the farmer's social life. Probably one of the greatest contributions of the Grange in the post-Civil War period was bringing about a more attractive social life in the rural areas. "Farmers, with their wives and children, have come together in the Grange, cultivated sociability, friendship and confidence in each other, submitted to useful discipline, learned parliamentary usage, accustomed themselves to read and recite in public, write and read essays, speak in debate and on the rostrum . . . many parents have been made happier in realizing its salutary influence upon the lives of their sons and daughters and their growing attachment for home, and in being able to keep the loved ones on the farm."⁴⁶

* * *

The Granger Movement was, thus, a part of a larger agrarian movement which started shortly before the Civil War and which, with its ups and downs, was nevertheless the concrete evidence of farmer unrest; and it epitomized their determination to get redress for the wrongs they felt were heaped upon them.

⁴³ Wiest, *op. cit.*, pages 412-414.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, page 424.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pages 428-429.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pages 429-430 (from the address of the National Master in 1895).

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What major developments characterized the post-Civil War period?
2. What general economic conditions led to a price decline following the Civil War?
3. What were the chief regional differences at the time?
4. Describe three major problems giving rise to the farmer movements of the period.
5. Why were the railroads made the center of the farmers' grievances?
6. Describe the social and educational position of the farmer at the time.
7. Upon what problems were the Midwest farmers' conventions centered?
8. What gave rise to the demand for advanced education for farm youth in this period?
9. What were the chief results of the Southern, Plains States, and the Northeastern movements?
10. What conditions impelled the founders of the Grange to form an organization?
11. What personal qualities did the leaders have which contributed to the character of the Grange order?
12. What were some of the outstanding accomplishments of the Grange in the two decades following the Civil War?

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Examine the regional differences in the United States immediately following the Civil War to determine their possible effects on the formation of farmers' organizations. Buck.
2. List the major issues discussed in the farmers' conventions which were held, as a basis for comparison with issues brought up in later farmers' movements. Wiest and Periam.

3. Compare the system of promotion of the Grange with other forms of farmers' organizations at the time (agricultural societies and fairs). Buck.
4. Trace in detail the events leading up to the passage of the Morrill Act, noting especially the part played by farmers' organization leadership. True, Carriel.
5. Describe the Granger Laws and how they affected the average farmer. Buck.
6. What were the events leading up to the placing of a "dirt farmer" in the office of Secretary of Agriculture? Buck.
7. Discuss in some detail the social advantages of a farmer's organization set up on the order of the Grange. Buck.
8. Discover, if you can, the factors causing the Grange to live through the period of its lowest membership, and to persist through the years when other farmers' organizations failed. Buck.

EXERCISE

Study your rural community for evidences of the influences of these early farmers' movements: the Groundswell; the educational movements for industrial and agricultural education; the movements in the South, plains states, Northeast; and the reforms secured through the Granger movement.

CHAPTER VII

THE FARMERS' ALLIANCE AND THE POPULIST MOVEMENTS

We have seen that up to 1875 discontent among farmers in the United States found expression in resolutions made in conventions, the development of mutual aid and cooperative activities, and representations to legislatures and to the Congress for remedial legislation. The newer movements, especially in the Midwest, were characterized as revolts, being "the inevitable attempts of a bewildered people to find relief from a state of economic distress made certain by the unprecedented size and suddenness of their assault upon the West and by the finality with which they had conquered it."¹

Conditions Leading to Unrest

The conditions of unrest grew as the nation moved out of the post-war into the depression period of the latter half of the Nineteenth Century. The penetration of the American interior by the railroads symbolized the rapid, unplanned settlement of the New World. At first settlements preceded the building of the railroads. Then railroads were constructed ahead of settlements and their builders in turn encouraged settlement; they advertised profusely free lands in the West and organized colonization parties to settle upon them so as to provide a "job haul" for their lines.

1. LEGISLATION FAVORING RAPID SETTLEMENT. Three land Acts of importance encouraged rapid settlement on small parcels of land: (1) the Pre-emption Act, whereby the settler could "squat" for six months on 160 acres and then gain ownership by paying \$1.25 per acre. (2) the Homestead Act whereby a settler could get a grant of 160 acres (160 acres outside the limits of railway grants and 80 acres within) if he would live on the land for short periods each year for 5 years, and (3) the Timber Culture

¹ John D. Hicks, "The Populist Revolt." Minneapolis: The Uni. of Minn. Press, 1931, page 2.

Act whereby a settler could acquire 160 acres by planting a certain acreage of timber and by living on the land for 8 years. Though each act was designed to encourage settlement on family sized farms, a settler could take advantage of all three acts and "thus secure a total of 480 acres of land at a cash outlay of about 50 cents per acre."²

2. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE "BOOM" ACTIVITIES. Railroad advertising was supplemented by state, local, and individual activities, the State Board of Agriculture and Immigration, town councils, city chambers of commerce, real estate men and speculators, newspaper editors, and church societies. The picture was made so attractive that it was said, for example, in Kansas one could find "a life of ease, perpetual June weather . . . milk and honey."³ Foreign and eastern money flowed into the "'cow country', overstocked the range, pushed cattle into areas where the grazing was poor and prepared the way for an appalling disaster."⁴ New and easy credit came with bumper crops, high prices, and rising land values. Many borrowed money to enlarge their holdings, improve their breeds of stock, and purchase the latest and best machinery.

3. EVOLUTION OF THE SHARE-CROP SYSTEM. In both the West and the South, the small farmer came to be predominant. In the South lands of planters were placed on sale and attracted large numbers of poor whites, some negroes, but few outsiders. However, many, especially negroes, remained tenants.

Credit was needed to buy land. Cash and share cropping on small acreages became common. The crop lien system compelled the small farmer to buy from the merchant, who advanced him money on his signature, taking liens on horses, mules, oxen, necessary provisions, farming tools, and implements. As a guarantee to the merchant, the farmer had to mortgage his "entire crop of cotton, cotton-seed, corn, fodder, peas, and potatoes"⁵ and was legally obligated to trade with him until the account was settled in

² *Ibid.*, page 11.

³ *Ibid.*, page 17.

⁴ *Ibid.*, page 19.

⁵ *Ibid.*, page 43.

full. This system contributed to the one-crop evil, cotton, for it was easily marketable.

"The struggle for white supremacy had saddled the South with a one-party political system under which the Democratic machine could count on the unthinking support of a vast majority of the voters." ⁶ The negro was denied any political rights, and the ruling caste used this power to preserve the privileges it enjoyed.

4. DECLINING PRICES, WORLD TRADE AND RAILROAD RATES. The chief grievances expressed by farmers of the period beginning in 1875 included many of those present in the earlier period, but enhanced, if anything: (1) The period from 1870 to 1897 was one of steadily declining prices. (2) Revolution in means of transportation opened up world markets to the American West—markets in Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Canada, India, Mexico, and Russia.

The export surplus set the price for the domestic output. Western farmers blamed the railroads—they were the means by which all western crops must be sent to market. Local rates, especially on small loads, were particularly high. Competition did not affect these rates as usually only one road was involved. Stock watering was also thought to contribute to high rates. Secret rate understandings with grain elevator companies were hard to prove, but discrimination with respect to cars was open and notorious—"parties desiring to ship grain, whether producers or purchasers, where there is an elevator, must ship through it, or construct an elevator of at least 30,000 bushels, or cars will not be furnished." ⁷

5. DOMINATION OF GOVERNMENT BY RAILROADS. The burden of public debt incurred to help the railroads was staggering in both local and state governments. Normally the railroads—sometimes a single road—dominated the political situation in every western state. Railway passes were used to purchase men of influence—members of legislatures, editors, ministers, and local politicians. "Shift of lands" through grants to railroads for which settlers were

⁶ *Ibid.*, page 51.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pages 75-77.

charged 'from three to ten prices' and a pernicious credit system forced the farmer into almost perpetual "bondage." Through connivance of the railroads with the grain elevators, the farmer was deprived of a free market. The local elevator man could dictate the price or cooperate with his neighbor elevator man in a monopoly price. Therefore, irregularity and unfairness in grain grading was common.⁸

6. PROTECTION POLICIES RESULTING IN FARMER EXPLOITATION. Prices of things purchased were "fixed" by trusts, combines, railroads, and local merchants. The protective tariff was a means of protection of other classes at the expense of the farmer—he was the victim of a system of free-trade selling and protected purchasing. This situation was felt most heavily by the South, for farmers there had to sell cheaply on the European markets, but could not purchase cheaply because of the tariff.⁹

7. CHANGING POLICIES RELATING TO MONEY AND CREDIT. The heavy burden of debt, however, really aroused the farmers in the South and the West to action. Money the farmer had borrowed was not worth to him what he had contracted to pay for it—the only result being foreclosure, which meant loss of property. Taxation, also, added a heavy burden; farm property could be seen and thus assessed at full value—other property might be concealed.

The chief grievance was against the system of money and credit—high interest rates and commissions, and deductions causing rates to go up as high as 35 per cent on a nonappreciating dollar. Moreover, the value of the dollar fluctuated in a single year—it was dear when crops had to be sold and low only when the farmer had nothing to sell.

8. THE "INFLATION" OF THE VALUE OF THE DOLLAR. The national banking system was blamed. Farmers in the West and the South felt that the government was in league with the money lenders in an attempt to increase the value of the dollar. National bankers could buy United States bonds equalling not less than

⁸ *Ibid.*, pages 75-77.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pages 80-81.

one-third of their capital stock; they deposited them with the government and, using them as security, issued notes up to 90 per cent of the par value of the bonds. By issuing them freely up to 1873 and then cutting down drastically from then on, these bankers helped accelerate the depreciation of the dollar. The government debt was being retired, and some of the bonds were part of the debt and were repurchased, some at a premium. Thus, bankers profited not only through their note circulation but also in the sale of bonds, especially since the rule with regard to minimum bond regulations was being relaxed.¹⁰

9. LAND SPECULATION AND EXPLOITATION IN THE WEST. In the far West, 70 years of exploitation of minority, racial, and other groups has been carried on "by a powerful clique of landowners whose power is based upon an anachronistic system of landownership dating from the creation, during Spanish rule, of feudalistic patterns of ownership and control."¹¹

The gold rush had subsided by 1860, and migrants began searching for land. As a result of Mexican land grants, 8 million acres were held by Mexican grantees, many with vague conditions. Assignments were made by Mexican grantees to American exploiters. Settlers were allowed to take up land and make extensive improvements; then they were forced off by the exploiters. Many of the grants were forged, although they were confirmed by "fixed" courts. Several grants were surveyed far in excess of the original grant.

Grants were made, also, to railroads. The grants were in alternate sections; but the "grant" sections were not well defined. Settlers taking up supposedly available lands frequently were forced off later because they settled on railroad grant land. The Southern Railroad, for example, encouraged settlement, waited until the land was improved, then claimed the land and evicted the settlers.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, pages 88-94.

¹¹ Carey McWilliams, "Factories in the Field." Boston: Little Brown & Company, 1939, page 7.

Loose land policies, corrupt state land officials, and "scrip locations" were rampant. Speculators bought so-called swamplands from the state for \$1.00 an acre, with no limit to the amount that one person could purchase. The result was that by 1871 "the land of California was monopolized by a few individuals . . . no settler could make a home . . . unless he paid tribute."¹² Only 516 men owned 8,685,439 acres. Scrip locations arose as a result of "half breed scrip" issued by the government in exchange for Indian lands. The holders of the scrip had the right to select lands elsewhere in the government domain. The result of such land "policies" was large land holdings: "Of all farms whose production is valued at \$30,000 or above, nearly 30 per cent are found in California."¹³

The results of these land "policies" were that (1) thousands of settlers' lands were expropriated—great estates escaped taxation; (2) colonization was retarded—large acreages of land were cropped with wheat in 1860-1880; (3) agricultural practices were wasteful—land was overworked, cheap labor was used, and property was neglected and lorded over by absentee owners of large estates; and (4) a large number of transient laborers (tramps or "bindle stiffs") developed in the shadow of the "great lords of the soil."

Consequently, farming changed from a pastoral type to large-scale and wheat farming in order "to get money out of the land as quickly as possible."¹⁴ Wheat production increased from 6 million bushels in 1860 to 40 million bushels in 1890 because of inflated prices, growing population, a favorable climate, ease of shipment, large farms, and a scarcity of labor. As a result nomadic hordes of workers rushed to that section of the country, and large-scale machinery was used early.

After 1880, wheat declined as a productive crop, and many large farms turned to horticulture and viticulture. Scientific research—Burbank's experiments, for example—were exploited by the growers (a new pea developed by Burbank for which he

¹² *Ibid.*, page 20.

¹³ *Ibid.*, page 21.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, page 63.

received nothing made growers a fortune). By 1893, the fruit industry was faced with disaster—the growers then turned to sugar beets.

The fruit industry brought the growers into closer relations with cities because irrigation meant heavy capitalization. Crops with fruit were diversified; this fact caused some decrease in size of farms (average = 392 acres in 1900). By the nature of industry, cheap labor was relied upon. Distance to market stimulated cooperative organization early in the 20th century.

The Alliance Movement and Its Results

The Alliance Movement allegedly started as a protective association—an organization of Kansas squatters to defend their land titles against railroad claimants. Before it had run its course it had brought together, either directly or indirectly, almost all the farmers' organizations of the period from 1875 to 1895. The various farmer and other groups which joined the ranks of the Alliance movement gave it variety but not unity: Political favor was given by ex-members of the short-lived Peoples Antimonopoly Party of Minnesota and the National Greenback Party, for example. Also, dissatisfied members of the declining Grange took new interest and gave the element of secrecy and ritualism to some of the local and state Alliances. Moreover, editors of farm journals and political leaders gave it life and spirit.

1. ORGANIZATIONS WHICH BECAME A PART OF THE MOVEMENT. The "core" organizations of which the others became a part, either directly or indirectly, were the Southern and the Northern Alliances:

a. The Southern Alliance started in Texas in 1875 with a county organization to catch horse thieves, round up stray cattle, defend farmers against landsharks and purchase supplies. This movement spread into a state organization only to be killed through dissensions resulting from differences over the Greenback agitation. A new organization was formed in a nearby county, retaining the secret aspect of the first but remaining nonpartisan. For a time, the Texas Alliance, incorporated in 1880 as a "secret and benevolent association," was looked upon primarily as a social organiza-

tion. By 1886, it claimed to have 2,700 sub-alliances in 84 counties of the state. The order was supposed to educate the agricultural classes and declared the "brightest pearls which it garners are the tears of widows and orphans, and its imperative demands are to visit the homes where lacerated hearts are bleeding to assuage the suffering of brother or sister, to bury the dead. . . ." ¹⁵ Its policies, however, veered back toward the political in demands for higher taxation of lands held for speculative purposes, prohibition of alien landownership, prevention in dealing in futures of agricultural products, more adequate taxation of railroads, new issues of paper money, and an interstate commerce law, all of which were presented to the state legislature and to Congress.

Dissensions again grew up which threatened to split the order. C. W. Macune, a blacksmith, Methodist preacher, and able speaker and writer who read law, practiced medicine, and had an infectious personality but who was erratic in his judgment, lacking in business ability, and uncertain in ethical standards, proved to be the man of the hour; he brought the leaders of the two factions together, effected an armistice, and was made acting President of the organization. By January, 1887, the order had grown to 35,000 sub-alliances. In about a year and a half prior to 1887, it had added 28,000 locals. ¹⁶

The Texas Alliance was made up at first of direct representatives from local units, but later county organizations were formed to serve as cooperative buying and selling agencies. Women were admitted to the order as in the Grange; however, only white people could become members. The organization started by giving three degrees, but later on it gave only one—however, some county organizations developed a second degree known as the cooperative degree. Its officers were president, vice-president, secretary, assistant-secretary, lecturer, treasurer, doorkeeper, assistant doorkeeper, and an executive committee. ¹⁷ The state organization promoted cooperative marketing. Its president, Doctor Macune,

¹⁵ Wiest, *op. cit.*, page 451.

¹⁶ Hicks, pages 101-107, and Wiest, *op. cit.*, pages 449 and 450.

¹⁷ Wiest, *op. cit.*, page 450.

encouraged the members to build cotton mills, to manufacture only the cotton which could be used, to plant enough for their purposes and to spend the balance of their time on other crops for home consumption. It condemned high and discriminatory freight rates and insisted that railroads pay their just share of taxation. The order was especially sympathetic to organized labor; later the Farmers' Alliance joined hands with the Knights of Labor and "tried to help organized labor, but in doing so it destroyed itself" and "the economic interests of organized agriculture and of organized labor are not common."¹⁸

b. The Northern Alliance started in New York in 1877 (the plan supposedly having been brought from Kansas by a purchasing agent of the Kansas Protective Association, which having fulfilled its first objective¹⁹ turned to cooperative enterprises). The New York Alliance was made up chiefly of Grange members who sought to create a political mouthpiece for the Grange for railroad and taxation reform and legalization of Grange insurance companies.

The most effective Northern Alliance was formed by Milton George, a successful Fulton county, Illinois, farmer and newspaper man. His "Western Rural" served as a means to popularize the movement. Coming in a period of falling prices and rising discontent, the movement spread most rapidly in Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, and Nebraska, with 2,000 alliances having over 100,000 members in 1882. With better times the movement lost momentum—no annual meeting was held in 1884, but a revival came with the poor wheat crop in 1884-85 as the hard times of the late 80's set in. Government ownership of railroads and free coinage of silver were the most popular demands. By 1890 there were 10 freely organized state alliances, 5 others in process of organization, and numerous locals in other states.

c. The Colored Farmers' Alliance, which in number of members all but overshadowed the Southern Alliance, was an important element in the Alliance movement. It started in Houston, Texas, in 1886, and by 1891 it had 1,250,000 members.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, page 543.

¹⁹ Hicks, *op. cit.*, page 90.

d. Other groups which joined the movement included the Agricultural Wheel, organized in Arkansas in 1882, which was a secret order of male whites; the Brothers of Freedom, organized the same year, was similar in system and purpose. These two organizations joined ranks in 1885, spread to Kentucky and Tennessee, and consolidated with the Southern Alliance in 1888. They probably brought in the idea that the interests of farmers and those of organized labor were in common. Consolidation with the Louisiana Farmers' Cooperative Union, which developed out of a farmers' club founded in 1880 and using a secret ritual similar to that of the Grange, was brought about in 1887 in order to create a new National Farmers' Alliance and Cooperative Union of America.²⁰ Other groups coming into existence in this period were the Farmers' Mutual Benefit Association, which was organized in Johnson County, Illinois, and which had members in Michigan and elsewhere; and a Farmers' League in the Northeast.²¹ Most of them became a part of the Alliance movement. There was a close working relationship, moreover, between some of the Southern groups and the Knights of Labor, which had a membership of 700,000 in 1886.

2. POTENTIAL STRENGTH OF THE ORGANIZATION. Attempts were made to combine the Southern, Northern, and negro Alliances and the Knights of Labor. If these attempts had succeeded, the organization would have been the largest and most widespread of any yet formed. If these orders had been fused more than 3,500,000 members representing states from Florida to North Dakota and from New York to California would have been united. In the Ocala, Florida, Convention in 1890 for example, representation came not only from the southern states but also from California, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and many intervening states.²²

3. POINTS OF DIFFERENCE: a. Admission of colored people was the first point of difference between the North and the South,

²⁰ Wiest, *op. cit.*, page 456.

²¹ Hicks, *op. cit.*, page 97.

²² *Ibid.*, page 462.

but this difference was settled by allowing each state to make its own rules of eligibility.

b. The feeling on the part of the Southern leaders that the Northern Alliance was a loose organization and their objection to its non-secret nature led to dissension. For a time, the Northern Alliance had no system of fees or dues, allowed anyone to become a member so that colored people were eligible, and considered any person raised on a farm a farmer so that members could be recruited from nonagricultural classes.

c. The ambitions of leaders from various sections created difficulties, each section wanting dominance. For example, Col. Leonidas L. Polk of North Carolina, Editor of the "Progressive Farmer," was ambitious for leadership in the order. Jay Burrows, Editor of a farm journal, prominent worker in the Grange, organizer of the Nebraska Alliance, a man of high character, and a leader of the Northern order, was also ambitious to head the combined order and was not content to let the southern leaders have their own way.²³

4. RESULTS OF EFFORTS TO CONSOLIDATE. Consolidation was attempted in the St. Louis Convention in 1889. However, barriers to such action were: (1) the Northern Alliance would not accept the name "Farmers' and Laborer's Union" to which the Southern group had changed two months before; (2) the Northern Alliance would not agree to the exclusion of negroes; and (3) the Northern Alliance felt that secrecy should be left optional. The Southern group made concessions. They agreed to accept the new name and to leave to each state whether or not negroes should be accepted, but they requested that the secret elements be retained. The North yielded and suggested a temporary confederation which the South rejected. The Kansas, North Dakota, and South Dakota Alliances were ready to join, however, and seceded from the North to become a part of the new Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union. Although further efforts were made to join the two groups, nothing ever came of them.

²³ Hicks, *op. cit.*, pages 116-118.

Movements Leading to Political Party Organization

The efforts to form one national organization failed; but this did not end the movement, for it became indissolubly involved with the third party movement which came to be known as the Populist movement. This turn of the Alliance leaders did not have the full support of the South; it was wedded to a one-party system. But the two sections were in accord on the land, transportation, and finance issues. Both also sought to place in public offices men who supported the Alliance measures. The conflicts in policy and desire, however, were real. They could be seen, for example, in the convention held at Ocala, Florida, in 1890. Though it was called the most important convention of farmers ever held for it brought representatives from different parts of the nation, it was beset by many pullings and haulings.²⁴ The Republican Party hoped to see a break in the power of the Alliance so that it would regain its strength. The Democratic Party was anxious for the Alliance to modify its economic demands so as to make cooperation more probable. The Western element demanded action, but the Southern delegates and those from most other sections held fast against too drastic action. Labor did not have an important part in the meeting.²⁵

The beginning of the end for the Alliance movement came with the Cincinnati Convention of 1891. The call for this convention was issued to members of "the Independent party, the People's party, the Union party, organizations of former Union and Confederate soldiers, the Farmers' Alliance—Northern and Southern—the Farmers' Mutual Benefit Association, the Citizens' Alliance, the Knights of Labor, the Colored Farmers' Alliance, and all others who agreed to the St. Louis demands in December, 1889."²⁶ The Southern Alliance was not represented.

The Northern Alliance asked for (1) free silver, (2) abolition of national banks and substitution of direct issue of legal tender notes, (3) government ownership of all railroads and telegraphs,

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pages 118-127.

²⁵ Buck, *op. cit.*, pages 27-28.

²⁶ Hicks, *op. cit.*, page 209.

(4) prohibition of alien land-ownership and of all gambling in stocks, options, and futures, (5) a constitutional amendment requiring election of president, vice-president, and senators by direct vote of the people, and (6) the Australian ballot system.

The Cincinnati Convention was made up of one group strong for a third party to be set up immediately and another group strong for deferring the action until the next election. As a result, the outcome of the convention was so indeterminate as to be almost a failure. Nevertheless, it encouraged further effort toward the formation of a third party, set up a national committee, and gave nonagricultural third party leaders an inside track on further deliberations.²⁷

Merger of the Alliance and Populist Movements

The leaders of the Alliance movement had brought it so far into the political field that there was no turning back. They came to believe that an agrarian party was necessary and possible in America. Some of their demands were popular and made many followers. The three demands of the Alliance in 1889 and 1890 were (1) abolition of national banks and the establishment of a subtreasury plan, (2) prevention of future dealings in agricultural and mechanical productions, and (3) the free coinage of silver. The subtreasury plan, submitted as a bill in Congress, would have the U. S. Treasury set up a warehouse with suitable branches in each state so that farmers could deposit grain, cotton, or tobacco and secure treasury notes equal to 80 per cent of the estimated value of the produce which could be redeemed by paying a 2 per cent interest on the amount advanced.

Encouraged by its success in carrying many local and some state elections in 1890 and 1891, the new party nominated Weaver from Iowa as its candidate for President in 1892. However, it carried only three states. The Populist movement spent itself on the free silver campaign in 1896 and never recovered.

The movement, although carrying on the experiment in co-operative marketing, entered too much into the unfamiliar field of

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pages 210-221.

politics. "The fundamental occasion for the failure was the unsound economic thinking which permeated the advices at the beginning. They had delivered broadside shots at evils in general and they had hit nothing in particular."

Results of the Alliance Movement

The economic efforts of the various Alliance groups were patterned considerably upon those of the Grange. Farmers' stores were started, but many failed because of poor management and inability to get credit. Farmers' elevators were organized, a few of which survived to become the patterns for later farmers' cooperative elevators. From 1888 to 1895, a great deal of cooperative purchasing was done for twine, fertilizer, feeds, seeds, etc. The chief selling efforts were the sale of grain through elevators and of cotton through exchanges. State agents handled general farm and family supplies. "The immediate economic program was merged in the political program in the belief that the latter comprehended the farmer, and must be solved first, after which details would take care of themselves."²⁸

The Alliance and Populist movements occupy an important place in the history of farmers' organizations, for it brought into sharp focus, nationally, the ills of the farmers of America and laid the groundwork for later efforts at organization, both to gain redress of wrongs and to form effective cooperatives.²⁹ It was the last major effort on the part of the American farmer to form his own political party; from that time on the farmer sought redress of wrongs through political channels by other means.

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²⁸ B. H. Hibbard, "Marketing Agricultural Products." New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1929, page 227.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, page 229.

- BUCK, S. J., "The Granger Movement." Cambridge: Harvard Uni. Press, 1913, pages 27-28.
- MCWILLIAMS, CAREY, "Factories in the Field." Pages 7, 20, 21, and 63.
- WIEST, EDWARD, "Agricultural Organization in the United States." Lexington: University of Kentucky, 1923, pages 456, 449-450, 453, and 462.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What were the land settlement acts of the period and what were their provisions?
2. In addition to these acts, what inducements were there for land settlement in the Midwest during this time?
3. What were the conditions leading to the establishment of small farms in the South?
4. Discuss the conditions leading to the discontent beginning in 1875.
5. What were the types of land transfers in the far West causing concentration of holdings?
6. What organizations were represented in the beginnings of the Alliance movement?
9. What were the chief differences between the Northern and the Southern Alliances?
10. What events led up to the participation of various Alliance factions in the Populist political campaign?
11. What were the chief demands of the new party?
12. What were the chief causes for the dissolution of the Alliance movement?

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. List the chief grievances of the farmers of the Midwest contrasting them with those of farmers in the South, the West and the East. Hicks and Wiest.
2. Trace the trend in prices for the major agricultural products for the period, 1870 to 1900. Buck.
3. What changes were made in the type of agriculture in the far West? McWilliams.
4. List the organizations involved in the Alliance movement, giving the organization date and location of each. Hicks and Wiest.
5. Compare the policies and demands made by the Northern and Southern Alliances. Hicks and Wiest.
6. Describe the efforts at consolidation and show why they failed. Hicks.
7. What activities growing out of the Alliance program were of greatest benefit to farmers? Which ones failed, and why? Hibbard.
8. Discuss the reasons for the failure of farmers' and labor organizations to come to a common understanding. Hibbard and Wiest.

CHAPTER VIII

MOVEMENTS FOR COOPERATION, EDUCATION, AND CONTROL

The year 1900 marks the beginning of a new phase of farmer organizations and farmer movements in the United States. The era is marked (1) by the early and continued growth of farmer cooperatives, especially in marketing, (2) by the growth and spread of two new general farmers' organizations—the Farmers' Union and the Farm Bureau, and (3) by the development of additional governmental aid to the farmers—the Extension Service—favorable legislation for farm cooperatives, and additional funds for research (especially for agricultural economics and rural sociology).

Recognition of Social Problems

The beginning of the Twentieth Century marked the expression of interest in the social problems connected with agriculture. In the post-Civil War period, emphasis was laid upon experimentation in production—concern about plant life, animal breeding, and soil culture. In the last half of the nineteenth century, "troublesome economic problems connected with agriculture were being brought to the country's notice by the farmers themselves."¹ The problems of social importance were given secondary or only passing notice although farmers' organizations themselves were a significant medium of socialization among farm people.

1. THE EMERGENCE OF A "RURAL PROBLEM." The turn of the century was marked by a realization that the "free land" frontier in America was passing, that people were beginning to "go to town" in large numbers, that the country was primarily industrial relegating agriculture to a secondary status, and that a rather serious "rural problem" was beginning to emerge. Hence, the

¹ Carl C. Taylor, "Rural Sociology." New York: Harper and Brothers, 1933, page 3.

process of urbanization was beginning to set in because the city had the preferred type of life; life on the farm was only for those who could do nothing else.

2. FROM PHYSICAL TO SOCIAL ISOLATION. Physical isolation of the farmer began to pass with the coming of rural free delivery, telephones, automobiles, all-weather roads, radios and daily newspapers. Yet isolation in the form of greater segregation in rural areas led to difficulty in making social contacts as effectively as they could be made in cities; therefore the farmer, having lost in proportional numbers, also was outnumbered in the markets and legislative halls. Thus rural cooperation became a social problem increasingly difficult to solve because neighborhood and community ties were loosening, and because marketing, buying and social cooperatives were becoming more complex.

3. RELATIONS OF POOR SOIL TO POOR PEOPLE AND POOR SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS. The period was marked, also, by the fact that a few leaders were sensing the seriousness of the loss of fertility of the soil. It was recognized, too, that forests were being wantonly cut away. These leaders called attention to the close relation between poor soil, poor people, poor schools, and poor churches, and their effect on urban life.²

4. THE RETURN TO PROSPERITY. The hard times of the first half of the first decade of the Twentieth Century gave way at its end to the "Golden Age of Agriculture" which lasted from 1910 to 1919. In the first part of this period agricultural prices rose so that they had a buying power equal to nonagricultural prices. During this period attention was given to educational advancement: the work of the Experiment Stations was taken more seriously by many of the rank-and-file farmers to whom the returns for good farm practices was translated into good returns from sales of produce at fair and increasing prices. The European War, in which the United States became involved in 1917, greatly enhanced the prices of the period.

² See the Report of the Theodore Roosevelt Commission on Country Life. Reprinted by the University of North Carolina Press, 1944.

5. **DEPENDENCE ON WORLD CONDITIONS.** The United States was becoming a world power, largely as a result of factory development. Foreign agricultural products demanded by the United States industries were in competition with domestic products; the farmer became more conscious of the world situation, not only because his surplus had to be sold abroad but also because foreign supplies could be purchased abroad to compete with his own domestic market. Previous to the World War, the nation was a debtor nation and could receive goods in exchange for obligations.

Early Twentieth Century Farmer Movements

After the failure of the Farmers' Alliance, the feeling grew that "farmers cannot stick together" and that a strong national organization could not be formed. However, the Grange was gradually regaining its strength, especially in Maine, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and a few other states. The cooperative movement, moreover, was gaining momentum, though it was only one of a series of movements.

1. **THE COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT.** An independent group, the California Fruit Growers, started in 1885, had its troubles at first but later set the pace for similar cooperatives elsewhere. Cooperative elevators began to spring up to combat the "line" elevators in Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska. Cooperative creameries and cheese factories were developed in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Cooperative livestock shipping associations started in 1908. Later, milk produce cooperatives came into being. . . . "These various cooperative efforts, extending over a period of nearly a quarter of a century and in the later years touching large numbers of farmers, operated as a means of bringing farmers together and inculcating organization principles. Even the failures taught useful lessons. The development of the cooperative idea must be accounted one of the important factors in laying the foundation for a new 'farmers' movement' to follow."³

³O. M. Kile, "The Farm Bureau Movement." New York: The Mac-Millan Company, 1921, pages 60-61.

2. THE COUNTRY LIFE MOVEMENT. The condition of poor schools and churches and similar matters had been discussed for several years; in 1907 President Theodore Roosevelt appointed a Country Life Commission because, as he said, the time had come when it was "vital to the welfare of the country seriously to consider the problems of farm life." The report of the Commission was made in 1911. The chief deficiencies in country life listed by the Commission were lack of good schools, social centers, health protection, good roads, and home conveniences; it called attention to the frequent disregard of farmers' rights, waste of forest resources, depletion of the soil, exploitation of farm women through hard work, and unreasonable freight rates. It recommended (1) a study of all conditions surrounding the business of farming and the people who live in the country, (2) a system by which Extension teaching might reach into every home, promoting not only agriculture but also sanitation, education, and homemaking, and (3) a campaign for rural progress to unite the interests of education, a social organization, and religion into one forward movement for the rebuilding of country life.⁴

The nation-wide inquiry carried on by the Roosevelt Country Life Commission not only laid the basis for the Act setting up the Extension Service in 1914, but also gave impetus for the Country Life Movement resulting in the Organization of the American Country Life Association and the various school, church and similar movements starting later in the century.

3. THE RURAL ADULT EDUCATION MOVEMENT. The work of the Experiment Stations of the Colleges of Agriculture began to be accepted among the "common sense" farmers.

a. *Farmers' institutes.* Contacts with farmers' groups had been developed from a very early beginning through itinerant lecturers set up by agricultural societies previous to the Civil War. The first experiments with Farmers' Institutes as such, however, came after the Civil War. The Iowa Agricultural College experimented with Institutes before 1871. They were set up in Massachusetts

⁴"Report of the Commission on Country Life." New York: Sturgis and Walton Company, 1911, pages 107-144.

by the State Board of Agriculture in 1871. By 1891 approximately \$85,000 had been appropriated in the various states for Farmers' Institutes, and by 1899 all but three states were conducting them. More than \$170,000 was spent and about 2,000 Institutes were held which reached more than a half million farmers. These led, in the next few years, to more specialized efforts; dairy, soils, horticulture, and similar schools for farmers began to appear.⁵

b. *Extension departments.* Even prior to 1901 Cornell University formed an "Extension Department" to carry Experiment Station information to farmers. In that year, also, Illinois organized a department; three others followed in 1903; and by 1910 thirty-three colleges of agriculture were engaged in Extension work. The first state Extension Director was A. B. Graham at Ohio in 1905. Meetings attended by college professors were held in high schools, country elementary schools, town halls, churches and other local meeting places. Later special trains were equipped as classrooms with charts, blackboards, soil samples, fertilizer, and other illustrative material. These trains went from station to station at the railroad's expense, instructors travelling with them, being on the road for weeks at a time.

Agricultural extension schools, farmer's institutes, special meetings for women, demonstrations in spraying, pruning, packing and grading, fairs, exhibits, rural newspaper service, special lectures for Granges, farmer's clubs, farmers' reading courses, and an expanded bulletin service were part of the development. Agricultural high schools were developed in certain sections. Some country schools were consolidated. Corn, poultry, peanut, cotton, and similar clubs were developed, first among the school children and then among other youth in the community. The expedience of political reform seemingly had been tried and found wanting; farmers had turned to education as a means of helping solve their problems.⁶

c. *The Extension Service.* As has been indicated, the Roosevelt Country Life Commission gave impetus to a movement for a

⁵ Kile, *op. cit.*, pages 62-68.

⁶ *Ibid*, pages 68-70.

Federal and State Agricultural Extension Service. Also, as a result of the necessity for controlling the cotton boll weevil, Seaman A. Knapp, an educator of prominence and long standing in the United States, was sent by Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson to the South. He believed in the "learning by doing" method of teaching and, upon request, suggested a demonstration on a farm in Texas. The farmer chosen to cooperate would not do so unless protected against loss; the town businessmen gladly subscribed to an indemnity bond. The demonstration was so successful that demands from many sections of the South were made for similar work.⁷ Federal appropriations of funds from the General Education Board and from state and local sources made the employment of agents possible. Institutes were held; cooperation with existing farmers' organizations was secured; and numerous cooperators were pledged to conduct demonstrations on their farms.

By 1912, 858 field agents were located in the South—13 state agents, 36 district agents, 20 specialists, 639 county agents, and 159 collaborating agents assisting in girls' canning and poultry club work. In Pennsylvania a young lawyer from Ohio went to the country for his health, studied farm problems and their solution, and in 1910 was appointed the first county agent in the northern states. In New York a "farm bureau" had been set up by the Broome County Chamber of Commerce; John H. Barron became its agent in 1911.⁸ Agents for Soil and Crop Improvement Associations were hired in Kankakee and DeKalb counties in Illinois and a "farm adviser" went to work in Pettis county, Missouri. The agitation thus created led to the passage of the Smith-Lever Act on May 18, 1914, to give Federal support to Agricultural Extension work.⁹

Four types of organization developed to carry the work to the farmers: (1) a central (county) organization with a representative membership of farmers scattered generally throughout the county and paying an annual membership fee; (2) those with a

⁷ See Joseph Cannon Bailey, "Seaman A. Knapp." New York: Columbia University Press, 1945, Chapter 8.

⁸ Kile, *op. cit.*, pages 71-82.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pages 82-86.

central organization made up of delegates from township groups or other subordinate units; (3) those having a central organization made up of delegates elected from various local organizations, such as farmers' clubs, granges, farmers' unions, gleaners, the equity, etc., and (4) dissociated farmers' clubs without a central organization through which the agent extended his work. In some cases, the county board of supervisors or county commissioners constituted the central organization; in others, an agricultural committee of the county Chamber of Commerce was the cooperating body. In the South, principally, County Councils of Agriculture were developed. In 1919, county agents held 81,156 meetings, with a total attendance of 3,580,000; half a million farmers cooperated in actual demonstrations.¹⁰

Early Twentieth Century Farmers' Organizations

Undismayed by the failures of the last half of the 19th Century, farmers in various parts of the country tried out new organization schemes. Out of them came several present-day organizations.

1. THE GLEANERS. Following the collapse of the Alliance, a new organization, the Gleaners, started in Michigan in 1894. The Grange had been strong in Michigan, but it tended to be too conservative in advancing cooperative efforts. The Gleaners fostered cooperation in a very positive manner although the group followed the practice of organizing apart from the establishment of cooperative business concerns.

The order had the following purpose: (1) a fraternal organization for the payment of death benefits and (2) the establishment of cooperative organization, including mutual fire insurance. Membership was restricted to farmers actively engaged in farming. This membership grew to 80,000 at one time, mostly in Michigan. The order owned a building in Detroit, the National Gleaner Temple, and used its power to influence legislation, claiming to have given farmers greater representation in the state legislature in Michigan than was found in any other state; it joined up with the Farmers' National Council, an independent action of "insurgent state

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pages 89-93.

granges," the Michigan Potato Growers Exchange, the North Carolina Farmers Union and a so-called Plumb Plan League.¹¹ The Gleaners was only one of a number of new organizations which followed in the wake of the declining Grange and the dying Alliance in the late 1890's and the early 1910's.¹²

2. THE EQUITY. The American Society of Equity and the Farmers' Union came into existence in the same year, 1902. Local groups organized previously in southern Illinois led to the organization of the American Society of Equity. The plan of organization was presented to J. A. Everitt of Indiana, its founder and the author of "The Third Power" in which he undertook to prove that the farmers, by organizing, would be able to become as powerful as labor and capital.

The basic idea for organization was to gain control of markets through education. Since the farmers are under no legal or moral obligation to produce, organizations of farmers on a world-wide basis could build granaries, warehouses, and elevators; could hold out for a higher price when prices are low; and could market cooperatively and economically when the proper time comes for making sales. Their plan was (1) to induce farmers to enter the cooperative field and (2) to guide them to withhold produce from the market until "their prices" were obtained rather than to enter the marketing field directly. For example, they campaigned for "dollar wheat" in 1903 and 1904 and wheat prices did rise, probably partially due to this agitation but also to the fact that this was a period of rising prices, and the crop of 1904 was short.¹³

Similar efforts were made to control the tobacco crop. The tobacco campaign was not so successful, although the immediate results were more effective. To combat combines of buyers, some 40,000 "Black Patch" tobacco growers organized to raise the price from 5 and 6 cents to 11 cents a pound. "Night riders" rode rampant over noncooperators to enforce cooperation by threat of and

¹¹ Wiest, Edward, *op. cit.*, pages 552 and 553.

¹² *Ibid.*, pages 536-539.

¹³ Hibbard. *Op. cit.*, pages 231-232.

actual damage to crops and, as a result, by some loss of life. They won a dearly bought victory.

More spectacular was the Burley Tobacco Growers' campaign. Its plan was to force the only buyer, the American Tobacco Company, to pay what the growers felt was a fair price by pooling the crop, reducing production, and advancing money on pooled tobacco where needed. Three crops were then pooled, night rider methods were used to maintain control, and finally the company paid the price demanded. The next year no crop was pooled, production advanced, the price dropped to half that of the year before, and the American Tobacco Company had a more complete monopoly than ever before.

The financial and other backing given by the Equity affected its strength adversely. However, gains had been made: Warehouses had been built, a factory was started at Louisville, the growers' bargaining power was enhanced, and they became more intelligent on marketing.¹⁴ Their emphasis in organizational purposes changed. The society was reorganized in 1907. Its strength grew in Kentucky, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, and Wisconsin. Its most important new objectives were (1) to encourage the building of cooperative elevators, warehouses, etc., at local points and eventually at the central markets; (2) to establish exchanges for handling produce and supplies; (3) to secure legislation favorable to farmers; (4) to secure better educational advantages in the rural districts; (5) to promote such enterprises as the construction of good roads; (6) to prevent adulteration of foods; (7) to promote sociability through the organization of clubs; and (8) to encourage arbitration in place of law suits. Livestock shipping associations, potato and produce companies, elevators, and some exchanges, such as the Equity Cooperative Exchange at St. Paul, were organized.¹⁵

The new Equity, the Farmers' Equity Union as it was called, took the chief aim of the American Society (raising prices of agricultural products), but the local unions had no separate

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pages 233-236.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, page 237. (Also Wiest, pages 525-536.)

existence apart from the business enterprises. C. O. Drayton, prominent in organization work, helped organize in Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Nebraska, Ohio, and Texas. The membership was reported to have reached 65,000.¹⁶ Its effect has been primarily on cooperative organization—both buying and selling—on a local as well as a state-wide scale.

3. THE FARMERS' UNION. The Farmers' Union grew up in the area that the Alliance left without organization—the Southwest. It reflected the turn toward educational and cooperative interest in its name, the Farmers' Educational and Cooperative Union of America. The pattern for Farmers' Union Cooperative organization was said to have come from the Rochdale, England, cooperative movement.¹⁷ Newt Gresham, a former Alliance member, a newspaper editor, and a farmer, was its founder; the order made its start with 10 men, all farmers, in Point, Texas.¹⁸

a. *Purposes.* The first purposes of the Farmers' Union were to improve marketing, to secure better prices, and to provide a fraternal organization. Its first efforts were to endeavor to control prices, especially cotton prices, by agreeing upon a price and refusing to sell for less; later an attempt was made to limit the output in order to control price; attempts were also made to finance the farmer through a warehouse plan in order to enable him to limit output and to control price; in all, the effort was to educate the farmer on these plans for marketing control. The organization dealt also with problems of land tenure and credit. In several areas cooperative businesses on a rather large scale were developed by the Farmers' Union.

b. *The Spread of Unionism.* By 1903, the organization had spread to Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, and Oklahoma, somewhat the same area where the Alliance was active, and a national organization was set up in 1905.¹⁹ The states having delegates at

¹⁶ Wiest, *op. cit.*, page 535.

¹⁷ Gladys Talbott Edwards, "The Farmer's Union Triangle." Jamestown, N. D.: The Farmer's Union Education Service, 1941, page 19.

¹⁸ Hibbard, *op. cit.*, pages 241.

¹⁹ Wiest, *op. cit.*, page 475.

the national organization meeting were Arkansas, Alabama, Georgia, Indianhoma (Oklahoma and Indian territory), Louisiana, Tennessee, Kansas and Texas.²⁰

Membership spread from Texas to Arkansas, Georgia, and Louisiana, later to Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming where it became most active in the second and third decades, and finally to Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Ohio where it was erratic. New forms, such as the Holiday Association broke off or made up a more radical group. In the period 1908-1910, the average annual membership was 121,826; in 1917-1919, it was 140,066.²¹

The plan of organization laid emphasis upon a functioning local union of five or more male members; five or more locals formed a county union (although county unions were not very active); a state had to have 5,000 members to have an organization; each state had one delegate per 1,000 to 5,000 members and one for each additional 5,000 members. Secrecy and a ritual were prescribed at first, but these were later made optional. Country people who were farmers, teachers, preachers, doctors, or editors were eligible to membership. Bankers, merchants, and lawyers were barred.²²

c. *Program.* During the first years of the Farmers' Union, its attention was focused on cotton marketing. A price was fixed below which the farmer was advised not to sell. The plan seemed to succeed in 1906 but failed in subsequent years. It also succeeded in encouraging the farmers to hold cotton off the market in seasons when it was scarce and to sell when it was only relatively scarce. Moreover, efforts were made to bring about an acreage reduction and diversification. However, as one of its leaders declared, "Whenever we tell the farmers to plant less cotton, they plant more."²³

²⁰ Edwards, *op. cit.*, page 25.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pages 476-478.

²² *Ibid.*, pages 478-482.

²³ Hibbard, *op. cit.*, page 244.

In order to make crop control possible, local unions built warehouses, graded and insured the cotton, and issued receipts or loaned money on the stored cotton. Then state business agents were set up by the union to sell direct, and an unsuccessful effort was made in 1907 to sell to spinners in England and Germany. The interest in credit was extended to land; many cotton farmers were tenants and found difficulty in securing cheap credit either to carry on production or to buy land. Hence the union concerned itself with the credit problems of the farmer all through the years.²⁴

Though pledged not to participate in partisan politics, the Farmers' Union nevertheless did go into "business politics." It demanded "laws against dealing in futures on margins; favoring the physical valuations of railroads, telegraphs, telephones, and express companies as a feature of regulation; limitation of the ownership of land by aliens and by corporations; and opposing a central bank. In the various states the Union had demanded many reforms relating to the initiative and referendum, regulation of corporations, taxation, interest rates, pure food laws, and especially in several states, laws pertaining to agricultural education."²⁵

Business ventures, such as the Farmers' Union Exchange at Omaha, Nebraska, were started in 1915, and dealt in groceries, twine, coal, farm machinery, clothing, house furnishings, etc. They were set up to reduce prices on farm purchases. Several branch stores have been established. Other significant efforts have been the livestock commission offices in large cities, cotton gins, fertilizer plants, and local stores in the South.²⁶ Cooperatives of numerous types have since been organized, chiefly in the Midwest and South.²⁷

4. THE FARM BUREAU. The Farm Bureau began, not in time of stress as did most other farmers' organizations but in times of comparative prosperity for farmers, especially in the sections in which the movement spread most rapidly. The movement was probably made possible by its close connection with the County

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pages 245-246.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, page 249.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pages 249-250.

²⁷ Edwards, *op. cit.*

Agent and Extension Service Movement and because its leaders were staunch believers in education as a means of solving farmers' problems. Improved practices in farming mean more in times of high prices than they do in times of low ones. Farmers can be more easily induced to try new methods which promise greater pecuniary returns when increased yields due to better varieties can be sold at attractive prices—the higher the yield the greater the return in such situations. Hence the educational services provided through the cooperation of Extension Services and county Farm Bureaus met with ready response.

a. *Origins.* One of the first movements leading to farm bureau organization was in Broome county, New York. The secretary of the Binghamton Chamber of Commerce realized the economic interdependence of city and farm and, therefore, urged the organization to set up an agricultural committee. This committee, accompanied by representatives of the College of Agriculture, the State Department of Agriculture, and the U. S. Department of Agriculture, made a tour of Broome and other counties. Later a representative of the Lackawanna Railroad took part in the committee's discussion. The committee agreed that expert aid was needed to rejuvenate agriculture and that it could be done by setting up demonstration farms as object lessons. Doctor Spillman of the U. S. Department of Agriculture discouraged this plan as unacceptable to farm people and recommended Dr. Seamon A. Knapps' demonstration plan instead. The Chamber of Commerce, the Lackawanna Railroad, and the Department of Agriculture then raised funds to hire a county agent. John H. Barron, an Agricultural College graduate was hired on March 20, 1911; he started the work by going out to get cooperators for his demonstrations in the various communities. Community chairmen were selected, and the aid of existing organizations, such as the Grange, was enlisted. There was, however, no well-defined membership requirements. Membership in an organization of this nature to carry on the work was first secured in West Virginia; the members were to pay a fee, elect officers, and solicit more members.

The movement for a similar type of organization was under way in Illinois. Henry H. Parke, who believed that the story of the findings of the Agricultural Experiment Station could be told more effectively through county farmers' institutes, organized farmers' clubs to hold one-day institutes in all communities. In 1910-1911, meetings were held in all the communities of the county; 700 farmers were members of the various farmers' clubs. Leaders in these clubs began to feel the need for an expert who would live in the county and devote his time to educational work among farmers. The idea was discussed with farmers, bankers, editors, ministers, and educators. Mr. Parke sent out a letter calling a special meeting of all those interested in DeKalb on January 5, 1912. O. D. Center represented the College of Agriculture of the University of Illinois at this meeting. It resulted in a vote to hire an agricultural expert; bankers pledged \$100 each to support the movement, and newspaper men volunteered to carry publicity on the venture to every part of the county. An executive committee was appointed to hire an agent, and committees of three were appointed in each township to solicit funds and secure membership in the new organization.

A similar organization was formed in Kankakee county: DeKalb county hired William G. Eckhardt and Kankakee county, John S. Collier—both graduated from the University of Illinois College of Agriculture and both started work in June, 1912. These men became known as "soil doctors" in their respective counties. They traveled from meeting to meeting and from farm to farm, preaching the doctrine of permanent soil fertility advocated so assiduously by Cyril G. Hopkins of the Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Illinois.

From the first, the Extension Service leaders worked upon the theory that the service would be most effective if farmers would organize and provide local cooperative groups for carrying out the work. Hence, the policy was established soon after the enactment of the Smith-Lever Law, and leaders from the College of Agriculture assisted in the organization of county farm bureaus, the type to offer the most effective local cooperation.

b. *Spread.* Beginning in 1916, county farm bureaus were organized rapidly over the state. Some of the services they introduced were machinery schools, fruit tree pruning and spraying, poultry care and management, seed corn testing, and the development of dairy herd improvement associations. Demonstration exhibits were developed for testing soils, treating oats for smut, vaccinating hogs, and managing farms. Led by the Tazewell County Farm Bureau through its president, Herman Danforth, and Farm Adviser, E. T. Robbins, a state organization developed among the farm bureaus in DeKalb, Kankakee, Livingston, McLean, Tazewell, Woodford and nearby counties. The first meeting was held in 1916 at the College of Agriculture; at this meeting, an Illinois Agricultural Association of County Farm Bureaus was recommended, the membership fee to be \$120 per county. H. W. Danforth, President of the Tazewell County Farm Bureau, was made temporary president. A second meeting was held in Ottawa in March of the same year; at this meeting a constitution was adopted which provided for promoting the general interests of agriculture. The association was pledged to work out a system of greater economy and efficiency in marketing, to encourage and promote cooperative organization of farmers, to publish and issue reports, bulletins, and instructions for help in spreading the knowledge of rural betterment, to encourage and cooperate with educational institutions, to cooperate in the purchase of seeds, fertilizers, and other commodities as seemed desirable from time to time, to make a thorough study of legislative matters, and to use its influence in securing the enactment of wise legislation and the defeat of unwise legislation.

Later a demand was made for a better system of financing. In January, 1919, the delegates from the counties voted for \$5.00 membership fees for the state organization. One hundred farmers each pledged \$100 to support the plan and signed notes to that effect; none of these notes had to be paid. Two years later the association had 90,000 members.²⁸

²⁸ Records in the offices of the Illinois Agricultural Association, Chicago, Illinois.

County farm bureaus were also organized in other states, and other state organizations were formed, particularly in California, New York, Ohio, and West Virginia. In New York the county farm bureaus federated in 1917. M. C. Burritt, Vice-Director of Extension and state leader of county agents, played the leading role in effecting the organization; 34 county farm bureaus sent delegates. In January of the same year, Nat T. Frame, state leader of county agents in West Virginia, called a meeting to discuss a state organization; a federation was formed in 1918.²⁹ In Ohio the organization of the state federation was the result of the feeling members of many county organizations had that cooperative marketing and purchasing, legislative work, and several other projects could be developed more effectively by a federation of county units than by separate organizations. As a result of discussions held on this topic in 1917 and a committee formed in 1918, an organization was formed during Farmers' Week at Ohio State University on January 27 and 28, 1919. Representatives from 78 counties took part in the proceedings.³⁰

Wartime necessities had no small part in the development of farm bureaus. "When the United States entered the First World War and food shortages developed, some sort of national system (of agricultural adult education) became necessary for encouraging increased food production and for publicizing among farmers the special provisions of the national government for dealing with the war situation. Within a short time county extension agents were provided in nearly all of the 2,500 agricultural counties in the United States. It was coincidental that the officials of the United States Department of Agriculture and many agricultural college officials believed at the time that the 'farm bureau' provided the best arrangement for sponsoring the work of the county agent. This particular form of organization was required in many states as a condition for providing an extension agent. Many states,

²⁹ Wiest, *op. cit.*, page 509.

³⁰ T. B. Manny and R. C. Smith, "The Ohio Farm Bureau Federation From the Farmers' Viewpoint." Columbus: Ohio State University Publication, April 1931, page 1.

including all the states of the Middle West, adopted this form of organization."³¹ The basis was thus laid for the organization of a national farm bureau organization.

c. *National organization.* When the war was over the demand for food production diminished and the new demand was for a control of food surpluses, thus causing a change in the emphasis by farmers' organizations. In the states which had county farm bureaus the "tendency was toward making the county agent a farm bureau organizer. Until the farm bureaus had been organized, few farmers belonged to any general farmers' organization. There was a crying need for organization. The war had shown what farmers could do when organized even on a county basis. Many saw the greater possibilities when state organizations and a national organization could be formed. By 1919, there were 800 county farm bureaus and 22 state farm-bureau federations in the country. In 1920 the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation attained the highest percentage membership ever reached by a state farm-bureau organization, 113,000 farmers out of 220,000 in the state."³²

The American Farm Bureau Federation was temporarily organized in November, 1919, two years after the first state organization; the permanent organization was effected in March, 1920. The first meeting came as a result of an invitation from the New York Federation. This group felt that the time was ripe for developing a country-wide organization with units in every county. C. B. Smith of Michigan, later Assistant Extension Director of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, pointed out the need for associations in every county. A second meeting was in November, 1919, in Chicago, attended by 500 delegates, 200 of which were from Illinois. In this meeting differences developed relative to the foundation of the organization: Illinois delegates urged the business point of view; the East were for setting up an educational organization; the Ohio delegates took a middle stand.³³

³¹ H. M. Hamlin, "The Community Program of Agricultural Education." Champaign, Illinois: Illini Union Book Store, 1943, page 49.

³² *Ibid.*, page 49.

³³ Wiest, *op. cit.*, page 510 and Kile, *op. cit.*, page 115.

Setting up an educational organization had its difficulties. Relations had been very close with agricultural extension. In order to collect farm-bureau dues, however, "it became necessary to give members services to which non-members were not entitled. Thus a publicly supported program of agricultural extension was largely limited in some states and counties to farm-bureau members, who were in many cases a small minority of the total population. . . . Many state and county farm bureaus went in strongly for commercial activities, handling them through the farm bureaus themselves or through subsidiary organizations."⁵⁴ This difference between emphasis upon business as against education was reflected in the dues: those for an educational organization could be low; those for fostering cooperative enterprises and favorable legislation would have to be much larger.

A conciliatory position was effected in the March, 1920, meeting, which strongly supported both the educational and the business functions, with each state organization taking its choice. In the November meeting a cost-of-production-plus-a-reasonable-profit policy was urged, but in the March meeting no mention was made of the matter.⁵⁵

The federation aspect was provided for by a delegate system—each qualified state at that time being entitled to one delegate plus one for each additional 20,000 members. A board of directors, elected from state organizations, was to be drawn from among practical farmers. Annual dues were set at 50 cents per member. Thus, the officers and the Washington representative received good salaries.

5. THE NON-PARTISAN LEAGUE. The Non-Partisan League came after the formation of farm bureaus, and was one of the last of the farmers' organizations to grow out of discontent in the first two decades of the Twentieth Century. It took the place of the Farmer's Union in the area in which it became active; and it later died out to be replaced again by a stronger Farmer's Union organization.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Hamlin, *op. cit.*, page 50.

⁵⁵ Wiest, *op. cit.*, page 511 and Hibbard, *op. cit.*, page 263-264.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pages 112-113.

a. *Origins.* The roots of the league's discontent can be traced to political bossism leading to the control of railroads, elevators, warehouses, and central markets for grain in North Dakota. The first uprising came in 1892 when Alliancemen, Populists, and Democrats fused to elect their candidate as governor of North Dakota. The real revolution came in 1906 when a "sympathetic" governor was again elected and a system of primary elections was adopted.⁸⁷

Increased agitation continued until the league was organized. Many cooperative elevators were built but not enough to effectively compete with the "old line" elevators. In 1909 an Equity Exchange was established at St. Paul to serve farmers' interests, but it was denied a seat in the Minneapolis Grain Exchange by the Chamber of Commerce on the grounds that the board excluded institutions which shared their profits with their customers. Agitation for legislation permitting the building of a state-owned elevator at St. Paul was defeated, furnishing a pretext for a revolution and for the organization of the league in 1915.⁸⁸

By 1920, the league, which was started in 1915, claimed 234,659 members in Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin, with over 125,000 in the Dakotas and Minnesota.⁸⁹ This territory is somewhat the same as that occupied by the Alliance, the Populist Party, the Equity, and the Farmers' Union, the center of the league being in the North; most of the others centered in the Middlewest and South.

The leaders of the movement included: A. C. Bowen, a socialist politician who suggested the League's formation; A. C. Townley, a speculator who became bankrupt in huge flax ventures and who turned to socialism as an ideal state; Fred B. Wood, a farmer and past member of the Equity and who became a socialist; Charles Edwards Russell, the first editor of the League's paper, the *Non-Partisan Leader*, and a lecturer who had a great deal to do with

⁸⁷ Andrew A. Bruce, "Non-Partisan League." New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921, pages 28-33.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pages 54-59.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pages 8-9.

the League's early policies; Walter C. Mills, a minister who later organized several stock selling enterprises which failed, and who helped organize an Australian labor strike to control the railroad and shipping industries (farmers, arming themselves, broke the strike), and who was one of the League's most ardent lecturers; David C. Coates, the business manager, who helped perfect the Industrial Workers of the World organization in 1905, who gave the League its secret caucus, and who sought to perfect a collective bargaining agreement with the I. W. W.; William Lemke, a politician who stood in the forefront of the League's campaigns; Lynn J. Frazier, Lemke's classmate and who became the party's trusted candidate for Governor of North Dakota and later for Senator.⁴⁰

b. *Purpose and program.* "The movement started with an attempt to control the price and the marketing of grain." It soon was turned into a movement for state socialism in all things except farm lands.⁴¹

Once the league was organized, it quickly set up its program which included: (1) state ownership of terminal elevators, flour mills, packing houses, and cold storage plants; (2) state inspection of grain and grain dockage; (3) exemption of farm improvements from taxation; (4) state hail insurance on the acreage tax basis; and (5) rural credit banks operated at cost.⁴² The new elements in the program were points (1) and (5), and the league succeeded in bringing them about to a surprising degree. A bank of North Dakota was organized with a capital stock of \$2,000,000. Bonding of the state for credit and industry was upheld by the state and national supreme courts.⁴³

c. *Decline.* The organization was short lived. By 1921 it was waning and shortly thereafter it became inactive. But it had profound influence on the political and economic life of the people during and after its period of activity. Of it Bruce says, "Originally

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pages 60-70.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pages 1-2.

⁴² Hibbard, *op. cit.*, page 254.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, page 256.

it was a movement ostensibly for the betterment of the condition of the farming classes. It was a protest against unfair grain grading, trading in options, and the control of the grain and cattle markets of the Northwest by the chambers of commerce and business interests of Minneapolis, Chicago and Duluth. Now its program and its projects are much more comprehensive, and North Dakota has become the home center and the source of moneys and supplies for a nation-wide campaign for the creation of a new political party which shall be founded upon discontent and whose ultimate object, besides bettering the political and financial fortunes of its leaders, shall be the destruction of the middleman, the industrial entrepreneur and the so-called capitalistic classes, and even the destruction of the private ownership in land itself."

By 1921, also, the Farm Bureau Movement was in its ascendancy. The Grange continued to hold steady. The Farmer's Union was still active. All of them were steering clear of actual political control; they exercised political influence, however, through existing political machinery. Although some of the leaders of the Non-Partisan League hoped to establish State Socialism, their hopes were more or less blasted.⁴⁴ The movement was significant, though, because it demonstrated that the people can have state-owned marketing facilities and banks if they want them, at least so far as the Constitution is concerned.⁴⁵

Federation of Organization Movements

Attention has already been given to the formation of the Farmers' National Council composed of the Gleaners, the Washington State Grange, the Michigan Potato Growers' Exchange, the North Carolina Farmers' Union, and the Plumb Plan League. The council favored the single tax; government ownership and operation of railroads, natural resources, and ships; packer control; and cheap credit.⁴⁶

1. A NATIONAL BOARD OF FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS. At the convention of the Farmers' Union in 1910, the group favored con-

⁴⁴ Bruce, *op. cit.*, page 273.

⁴⁵ Hibbard, page 258.

⁴⁶ Wiest, *op. cit.*, pages 552-553.

solidation with the American Society of Equity, but no such union was effected. Five years later the President of the National Equity and the Master of the National Grange met with C. H. Gustafson of the Union to formulate two bills,—one on rural credits and one on federal standardization of inspection, and grading of farm products. This meeting led to the formation of the National Board of Farm Organizations. Neither the American Farm Bureau Federation nor the National Grange became members. The membership in 1919 included the Farmers' Union, Farmers' National Congress, National Agricultural Organization Society, National Conference on Marketing and Farm Credits, National Dairy Union, National Milk Producers' Federation, Farmers' Society of Equity, Farmers' Equity Union, American Society of Equity of Wisconsin, Pennsylvania State Grange, Federation of Jewish Farmers of America, and a few others.

2. REPRESENTATION IN WASHINGTON BY FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS. The National Grange chose to support its own Washington representative, but it cooperated fully with the board. There was an aversion to the American Farm Bureau Federation, seemingly "due to its recent rapid growth and to the fact that it endanger(ed) the existence of some of the other farmers' organizations. Also, its close cooperation with the Extension Service caused considerable enmity, for some time at least, against this farmers' organization among the leaders of the older organizations." ⁴⁷

The policy of having a legislative representative in Washington to present the farmers' point of view to Congress was first started by the National Grange. In 1921, the following four regularly supported legislative offices representing farmers' organizations were located in Washington: The National Board of Farmers' Organizations; The National Grange, The American Farm Bureau Federation; and the Farmers' National Council.

In general, the beginning of the Twentieth Century was marked by advances in cooperative organization among farmers,

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, page 552.

particularly of the producer type. A companion movement in education of adults in rural areas led to (1) the establishment of the Federal Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Services at Colleges of Agriculture, and (2) strong educational programs developed by the farmers' organizations themselves. Beginnings were made, also, in control of production and marketing, both by educational and coercive means. These three lines of endeavor expanded in the second and third and especially the fourth decade and all three commanded and eventually secured government aid.

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What events led to a recognition of the existence of social problems among farmers in the first decade of the Twentieth Century?
2. What were the conclusions drawn by the Roosevelt Country Life Commission?
3. What types of cooperatives developed in the first decade?
4. What features of the farmers' institutes gave impetus to the adult education movement?

5. What were the events leading up to the establishment of the Extension Service?
6. What was the program of the Gleaners; in what ways was it significant?
7. What was the basic idea of the Equity; how was the plan to be carried out?
8. Describe the organization plan and program of the Farmers' Union.
9. How were the first Farm Bureaus organized; what was the nature of their relationship with Extension Services?
10. In what ways did the philosophy of the Non-Partisan League leadership affect the growth and decline of the movement?
11. Discuss the efforts to secure cooperation among the various farmers' organizations; what were the results?
12. What three phases of activity developed in the first and second decades; of what significance were they?

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Trace the influence of Seamon A. Knapp in the development of the Extension Service. Kile and Bailey.
2. Study the impress of ritual and secrecy as compared with cooperative and legislative activity on farmers' organization stability. Kile, Wiest and Hibbard.
3. Compare the various farmers' organizations as to the extent to which they (1) engaged in educational activities, (2) carried on cooperative activities, (3) developed close relations with the Extension Service, and (4) advanced control measures as remedial measures for agriculture.
4. Study the growth of the Farm Bureau in Ohio from the standpoint of its emphasis upon cooperative rather than upon educational services. Manny and Smith.
5. Compare the characteristics of the leaders in the Farmers' Union, the Farm Bureau and the Non-Partisan League movements. Kile, Bruce, and Wiest.

EXERCISE

Study your own community to determine if any of the organizations studied in the previous chapter have had any influence upon it. Check with some of the older farmers who have lived in the community most of their lives and get from them the impress the various farmers' organizations made upon them, and their present attitudes toward the early efforts of these organizations. Discover, if you can, why they hold the attitudes they do.

CHAPTER IX

MOVEMENTS FOR AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

The "Golden Age of Agriculture" came to an end in 1921, following the World War of 1914-1918. The United States had changed from a debtor to a creditor nation. New land had been brought into cultivation all over the world. Soldiers were returning to seek farms or jobs. Power machinery was beginning to make itself felt. The supply of unoccupied workable western lands had been virtually exhausted. The Federal Reserve Board, influenced by pressure from the cities, set out to "deflate agriculture."

Farmers, through their three national general-service organizations—the Farm Bureau, the Grange, and the Farmers' Union—and through the increasing number of cooperatives, and their organization, the National Council of Farmers' Cooperatives, tried to bring pressure on Congress for new legislation to alleviate or correct these conditions. A 20-year period followed in which more remedial legislation affecting agriculture was enacted than had been passed in the previous 30 years and almost as much as in all the years since 1820.¹

Economic Conditions

The first postwar depression began in 1920 and ended in 1924. The conditions leading up to this depression and the one beginning in 1929 included (1) continued agricultural production in the face of deflation following inflation; (2) lowered total consumption as the result of increasing unemployment in urban areas; (3) increasing carryover of farm products depressing prices still further; (4) failure to reduce production in the face of such conditions; (5) slow reduction in high margins taken by middlemen during inflationary periods; (6) continuation of high railroad rates into the deflationary period; (7) continuation of high taxes; and (8) inflation of land values just before the deflation period set in.

¹ Donald C. Blaisdell, "Government and Agriculture." New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1940, page 36.

The First World War stimulated agricultural production, and the tendency to expand continued for several years afterwards. Wage-rate levels remained high, organized labor preferring to suffer unemployment rather than wage-rate reductions.²

Farmers were becoming a political minority. ". . . in periods of widespread agricultural distress—as in the 1870's and early 90's, and again in the 1920's and 30's, farmers strove hard to stem the tide by political means. Indeed, they won some impressive successes in those years. But in times of rural prosperity the agrarians have been rather more content to let the new forces of industrialism develop unchallenged. The increasingly urban character of our population has by now made the farmers a national political minority, albeit a very powerful minority."³

Movements for Remedial Legislation

Measures to relieve agriculture were numerous in the second decade of the twentieth century; some constructive legislation was passed; and the way was cleared for revolutionary legislation in the third decade. Farmers' organizations were intensively active in supporting relief measures; in the decade of the 'twenties, each organization supported its own program; in the first of the next decade, coordinated action was brought about; and in the latter half of the 'thirties, the farmers' organizations again drew apart.

1. EARLY AMELIORATING LEGISLATION. The first half of the decade of the '20's was marked by (1) the organization of the "Farm Bloc," which was encouraged by the American Farm Bureau Federation; (2) the enactment of the Capper Volstead Act, granting agricultural cooperatives immunity from prosecution under the antitrust laws so long as the price of the product was not unduly enhanced; (3) the organization of war finance corporations, which financed agencies for helping distressed farmers; (4) the calling of national agricultural conferences, by President Harding in 1922 and President Coolidge in 1925; (5) the passage of the

² John D. Black, "Agricultural Reform in the United States." New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1929, pages 31-47.

³ Carl T. Schmidt, "American Farmers in the World Crisis." New York: Oxford University Press, 1941, pages 98-99.

Packer and Stockyards Act; (6) the Grain Futures Act; (7) the Agricultural Credits Act; (8) the Fordney McCumber Tariff Act; (9) the Federal Intermediate Credit Act; and (10) the Purnell Act for research in agricultural economics, rural sociology, and home economics.

2. THE STRUGGLE FOR "RELIEF" LEGISLATION. The last half of the decade of the '20's was marked by the activity of the three great farm organizations in support of three different relief measures, and the counter-activity of the administration. The Fordney-McCumber Tariff Act did not aid the farmer very much. For example, in 1924 it placed a duty of 42 cents on wheat. Yet farmers in the United States exported all but one or two varieties of wheat and, consequently, were taking the world price, making the tariff nearly meaningless. Plans to make the tariff effective were numerous, the most notable being the McNary-Haugen Bill, the Export Debenture Plan, and the Domestic Allotment Plan. All three plans failed to become laws.

a. The most popular plan, the McNary-Haugen bill, was supported by the American Farm Bureau Federation. It proposed "that the export surplus be segregated from the amount that could be sold in the domestic market at a price equal to the world price plus the tariff duty. The surplus would be bought from farmers at such a relatively high price, too, but would be sold abroad at the world price. The loss on this export operation would be met by charging farmers an 'equalization fee' on the domestically marketed portions of their crops. It was expected that, by proper 'merchandising,' losses on sales abroad might be avoided, and that even if there were losses they would be much more than offset by higher prices obtained from the restricted amount sold in the domestic market. Furthermore, it was held that the plan would provide an automatic check on undue expansion of production. For the equalization fee would rise with increases in the export surplus, thus reducing the net price."⁴ The bill passed both houses twice and was vetoed twice, both times by President Coolidge. The

⁴ Schmidt, *op. cit.*, page 114.

administration probably feared that exports of relatively cheap American farm products would enable foreign manufacturing industries to compete more successfully with our industrialists in world markets.⁵

b. The second plan, brought to the attention of the American public by Dr. Charles L. Stewart of the University of Illinois, was supported by the National Grange; it was called the Export Debenture Plan. "It proposed that the Government pay bounties on exports of farm products. More specifically, they were to be paid to exporters in the form of negotiable instruments, or debentures, which the Government in turn would accept in payment of import duties. Thus the customs revenues would be reduced by the amount of the debentures issued. But prices of domestic farm commodities, it was claimed, would be raised."⁶ Near approaches to the Export Debenture Plan had been adopted in the nineteenth century in both France and Germany where it had seemingly worked to enhance domestic prices, with imports and exports acting as a check on each other.⁷ The export debenture plan was included in two bills passed by the Senate but was lost in conference with the House. Section 32 in the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1935 incorporated the plan in an active form.

c. The third plan, supported by the Farmers' Union, was the Domestic Allotment Plan. "Domestic consumption of each major crop would be estimated in advance of its production. Each farmer would be allotted his pro-rata share—that is, his 'domestic allotment'—of the output for national consumption. By issuing to the farmer a number of certificates covering his assigned share, and requiring that middlemen buy such certificates, it was hoped that the farmer would receive for his 'domestic allotment' a price equal to the world price plus the import duty. Any quantity produced in excess of the quota would be sold abroad at the world price. . . .

"A modified domestic-allotment plan was incorporated in the Hope-Norbeck bill, which was considered by Congress in the

⁵ *Ibid.*, page 113.

⁶ *Ibid.*, page 115.

⁷ Black, *op. cit.*, pages 256-257.

winter of 1932. The Hoover Administration left office before this measure could be passed." ⁸

d. As an alternative to the plans presented by the farmers' organizations, the administration set up its own plan—the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1929. It set out to help farmers develop economic cooperation under government auspices. A Federal Farm Board was established with a fund of \$500,000,000. With this fund the Board (1) undertook to organize and integrate cooperative associations on a national scale for each principal agricultural product, which was relatively successful; and (2) advanced money to farmer members on the security of their crops so that they could keep from marketing them until prices were more favorable. Since loans were made at above market price figures, speculators could buy on the open market and sell to cooperatives at a profit.

In order to make unnecessary the liquidation of loans at a loss in mid-1930, the Federal Farm Board established a "Stabilization Corporation" for wheat and cotton. This corporation was to take over the supplies held by the cooperatives at prices equal to the loan values and, by buying heavily, storing, and holding, was to make an effort to bolster prices. Farmers were urged to reduce production under the slogan "grow less, get more," but this suggestion only influenced the individual farmer to let his neighbor reduce his crop while he himself grew more. A mistaken estimate of consumer buying power and a large world wheat production forced the Board to abandon its efforts in 1931; this resulted in a drastic break in both wheat and cotton prices—only anticipating a drop in prices which seemed inevitable. The Board confessed it could not cope with the situation and recommended legislation that would permit governmental control of farm output.⁹

The Shift to Emphasis Upon Adjustment

Agricultural colleges had encouraged farmers to adjust production to demand in the period of the twenties, especially in the

⁸ Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pages 115-116.

⁹ Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pages 116-118.

latter part of the decade, well before national programs for adjustment were developed. Under the leadership of the late Dean H. W. Mumford, the College of Agriculture at the University of Illinois held Agricultural Adjustment Conferences, beginning in 1928. The U. S. Department of Agriculture developed the "Outlook" to encourage farmers to increase or curtail their plantings in accordance with expected market conditions.

Therefore, in the beginning of the third decade, "adjustment" was widely discussed. Moreover, since remedial legislation was not secured separately, the time seemed ripe for the leaders of all farm organizations to agree on a single plan.

1. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS CALLING FOR ADJUSTMENT. a. Beginning even before 1930, "farm and rural nonfarm purchasing power dwindled seriously, affecting industrial employment and profits. Bank failures in villages, foreclosures and tax sales of farm property, multiplied. Organized resistance to the legal processes of foreclosures and tax sales developed here and there. The dispossessed leaned toward proposals and action deemed radical by the more conservative. Schools, churches, social agencies, and organizations suffered severely."¹⁰ However, the years since 1930 have brought agriculture to a position of importance in the national economy not hitherto attained."¹¹

b. The number of farms in the United States increased 8.3 per cent from 1930 to 1935—evidence of the movement back to the land as a result of the depression in urban as well as rural areas. Farm population gained 6.3 per cent—especially in the New England, Middle Atlantic, and East North-Central regions. Farm land and buildings dropped 30 per cent in value. Gross farm income dropped almost 70 per cent by 1932 from the 1919 level—from 17 billion dollars to 5.3 billion. Based on a "parity" index of 100, which, in turn, was based on prices of farm products compared with non-farm products in the 1909-1914 period, indexes for 1930 to 1935

¹⁰ Edmund DeS. Brunner and Irving Lorge, "Rural Trends in Depression Years." New York: Columbia University Press, 1937, page 3.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, page 4.

were 87, 70, 61, 64, 73, and 86, respectively; the only years the index was above 100 was in 1917, 1918, 1919, and 1920.

Mortgage debt increased—in 1932 the ratio of farm debt to farm value reached an all-time high. The proportion of owner-operated farms that were mortgaged reached 42 per cent in 1930—approximately 7 per cent of all the farms were mortgaged at more than their depression values. Forced farm sales went from 14.8 per 1,000 farms in 1929 to 54.1 in 1933. The equivalent of one-half of the farms in South Dakota and over one-third of those in Montana changed hands in the decade 1926-1935. Including tax sales, the total forced sales were equal to almost 30 per cent of all farms for the decade. During the period 1929-1932, taxes fell less than half as rapidly as did farm purchasing power. Both debts and taxes had to be paid in dollars of greater purchasing power than formerly; this practice led first to non-payment, then to default, and finally to foreclosure.¹²

c. Though the post-war period saw the development of the Farm Bureau movement, the steady growth of the Grange, and continued activity on the part of the Farmer's Union, the efforts of these working separately fell short of stemming the tide toward rural distress. Much more was accomplished when these groups, joining hands with the cooperatives, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the Land Grant College Association pooled their resources and influence to secure effective measures for alleviation.

Many schemes, of course, had been advocated. A determined effort was made by Farmers' Union and Farm Holiday forces to write into a farm relief bill a plan for fixing prices at "cost of production." However, this seemed to be the time at last when all farm organization forces could agree on a measure. Certainly enough was at stake that agreement was highly desirable. Previously, in the history of farmer movements, the notable achievements were the result of efforts of only one or at best a few of the farmers' organizations.

¹² *Ibid.*, pages 4-37.

2. EARLY ACTION BY FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS. a. The American Farm Bureau Federation took the lead or participated in a series of joint conferences in 1931 on the Marketing Act. The president of the federation invited presidents and officers of the Farmers' National Grain Corporation, the National Livestock Marketing Association, the American Cotton Cooperative Association, the National Wool Marketing Corporation, and others to a meeting in Chicago on May 18, 1931.

A committee to draft a statement of principles was set up as a result of the conference; it included representatives from the American Farm Bureau Federation, National Grange, National Farmers' Union, North Dakota Farmers' Union, several cooperatives, a farm paper, and a Chicago bank. Agreement was reached that farmers needed education on true cooperative principles; that all farm groups should coordinate their efforts; that a National Agricultural Committee should be set up; and that another conference should be called.

In the third conference, agricultural college and extension leaders were present. This conference brought emphasis upon the need of organization among farmers, the need for education among women and children as well as among men in cooperative principles and the importance of the county agent in this program of education.¹³

b. The impetus for concerted action early in the decade of the 'thirties purportedly came likewise from the continued agitation of the farmers organizations. Upon the suggestion of Grange leaders, representatives of the American Farm Bureau Federation, the Farmers' Union, and the Grange met in Washington on January 6-7, 1932, to formulate a united farm program for the convening Congress on the Agricultural Marketing Act, rural credits, the monetary problem, taxation, speculation, and Philippine independence.¹⁴ Then President O'Neal of the American Farm Bureau Federation called a meeting of farm organization

¹³ American Farm Bureau Federation News' Letters for May 5, 12, and 19 and September 15, 1931, Vol. X, Nos. 18, 19, 20, and 37.

¹⁴ American Farm Bureau Federation News Letter, December 13, 1932, No. 42, Vol. XI.

leaders for the week of December 13, 1932. Members of the legislative committees of state farm bureaus met with the President of the Farmers' Union, the Master of the National Grange, the President of the American Cooperative Cotton Association, and other national farm leaders.¹⁵

The result of these conferences was an agreement on a rather broad unified program: (1) to continue the Agricultural Marketing Act and amend it so as to include the Debenture, Equalization fee or some other plan "which will make it effective on farm crops, in making tariffs effective on farm crops and in securing for American farmers cost of production on those portions of their crops sold for consumption in our own nation;"¹⁶ (2) to secure the major federal revenues from income taxation; (3) to call upon the President and the Federal Reserve Board to stop credit contraction and deflation; (4) to devise a tariff which would be fair to the farmer; (5) to enact legislation to prevent short selling, and (6) to secure Philippine independence.

c. The demands made upon Congress by the three farm organizations acting jointly included (1) restoration of prewar purchasing power of farm commodities, (2) reduction of agricultural production in line with effective demand, (3) application of these plans to basic products which have a price-determining effect on other products and on which the tariff is not effective because of the exportable surplus, and (4) establishment of a self-financing plan so that no new governmental agencies need be set up.¹⁷ The plan developed was definite and anticipated the conditions of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 in a number of important respects. The way was therefore paved for the most significant unified action by farm organizations ever achieved in American history, action leading to the enactment of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933.

¹⁵ American Farm Bureau Federation News Letter, January 12, 1932, No. 2, Vol. XI.

¹⁶ American Farm Bureau Federation News Letter, December 23, 1931, No. 51, Vol. X.

¹⁷ American Farm Bureau Federation News Letter, December 27, 1932, No. 43, Vol. XI.

d. A National Agricultural Conference to support farm legislation was formed in January, 1933. It was made up of the Farm Bureau Federation, the National Grange, the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives and the Farmers' National Grain and Livestock Marketing Association. It only strengthened demands made in previous conferences.

e. Both candidates in the 1932 presidential campaign had been "visited" by farm leaders. "On March 8, three days after his inauguration, President Roosevelt made good the statement in his acceptance speech that his party stood ready 'to be guided by whatever the responsible farm groups themselves agree on.' At Secretary of Agriculture Wallace's invitation a conference of national farm leaders was convened on March 10, 1933, in his Washington office. Attending this conference were representatives of the Farm Bureau, the Grange, the Farmers' Union, the farm cooperative organizations, and the farm press. These leaders agreed on a set of principles which were ultimately embodied in the AAA of 1933."¹⁸

From Individual to Concerted Group Action

When the United States Department of Agriculture, a creation of the people, was set up in 1862 "the activities of various societies, particularly the United States Agricultural Society, were of help in persuading Congress that farmers wanted representation for their industry in the federal government. During the 1870's, several farm groups, especially the Grange, took the lead in the movement which culminated in federal regulation of the railroads. The Grange also played a leading part in getting Congress in 1889 to make the Department of Agriculture an executive branch of the government under a cabinet officer. More recently, the Farmers' Educational and Cooperative Union and the American Farm Bureau Federation have been instrumental in bringing farm opinion to bear on Congress and the executive departments. Federal regulation of the grain exchanges, finally achieved in 1922, brought to a successful conclusion a fight which the Farmers' Union started

¹⁸ Blaisdell, *op. cit.*, page 42.

many years before. Mobilization of farm opinion behind the slogan 'Equality for Agriculture' was successfully accomplished by the Farm Bureau Federation in the 1920's."¹⁹

Dire distress came to American farmers in the beginning of the decade of the 'thirties. Drastic action was needed. Joint action by the leaders of the farmers' organizations, the cooperatives and the agricultural agencies and their national organizations led to the creation of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, an agency of direct action combining the force of organized farmers and governmental administration. But other forms of direct action had preceded the operation of this and other Acts. The next chapter deals with these direct action movements.

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- SCHMIDT, CARL T., "American Farmers in the World Crisis." New York: Oxford University Press, 1941, pages 98-99, 113, 114, 115-116.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What significant changes followed the World War affecting the agricultural situation in the United States?
2. Discuss the conditions leading up to the depression of 1924.
3. What were the chief relief measures put into effect in the first half of the decade of the 'twenties'?
4. Discuss the relief measures advocated by the farmers' organizations in this decade.
5. What happened to these measures; what alternative measures were proposed?

¹⁹ Blaisdell, *op. cit.*, pages 32-33.

6. Describe the essential social and economic conditions making imperative some sort of relief legislation for agriculture.
7. Trace the activities of the farmers' organizations from 1928 to 1932; what were the chief recommendations made?
8. Discuss the joint action of farmers organizations leading up to the enactment of the Agricultural Adjustment Act.
9. What were the demands made as result of the joint action of the farmers organizations?
10. What groups were active in support of measures leading to the enactment of the Agricultural Adjustment Act?

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Make a critical study of the "Agricultural Bloc." Black.
2. Compare the provisions of the farm relief measures sponsored by the Farm Bureau, the Grange and the Farmers Union. Black.
3. Analyze the Administration Plan—The Agricultural Marketing Act—to determine the reasons for its failure and the ways in which it succeeded. What were the elements in the Act in which farmers' organizations were chiefly interested? Schmidt.
4. Compare economic conditions in the decade of the 'twenties with those following the Civil War as they affected the activity of farmers organizations in the interest of agricultural relief. Buck and Brunner and Lorge.

EXERCISE

How did the 1924 and 1932 depression periods affect the farmers of your home community? What were the attitudes of farmers in these periods toward relief measures? What part did they take in advancing or retarding these measures? What organized activities were developed in the community as result of such measures as the Fordney-McCumber Tariff Act? The Federal Farm Board? The Capper-Volstead Act? The Federal Intermediate Credit Act?

To answer these questions and others on effects of farm organizations sponsored measures, talk to some of the older leading farmers in your community; those who lived through the period in the community. Try to determine what influences in your community, if any, contributed to these activities and what effects the work of farm organizations, especially, had on the activities and opinions of farmers.

CHAPTER X

THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIRECT ACTION

The new emphasis—farmers' organization for direct action—in the period of the 'thirties, grew out of the dire ills besetting agriculture in this period. It manifested itself in at least two general ways. At first the movement took the form of action taken by voluntary organizations such as the Farm Holiday Association and by sporadic groups striking for redress of wrongs, to increase prices or to attempt to gain control of the market. The later developments were in the form of government-sponsored farmers organizations, such as the AAA committees, set up to carry out provisions of the new remedial legislation. The farmer and his government had come together; government was a factor in the farm business and in family living of almost every farmer in the country.

Movements Involving Physical Resistance

Overt action in the early period took three forms: (1) strikes to resist efforts to force farm sales; (2) strikes to raise prices by keeping products off the market; and (3) farm labor strikes.

1. **STRIKES TO PREVENT SALES.** The strikes to stop sales took several forms: action to prevent foreclosures; action to prevent farm sales; mass action to scale down debts; legislation or action to enforce moratoriums. To prevent farm sales, groups of farmers followed the procedure of trying to stop a forced sale, and if they failed to do so, of bidding in the property for a few cents and returning it debt-free to the owner-occupant. Marches on county court houses to protest or forcibly prevent foreclosure proceedings were frequently reported. In a large number of cases, committees of farmers investigated the facts in regard to every foreclosure and tax sale, and, by threatening to resist foreclosure proceedings, would force adjusting or scaling down of debts.¹ Frequently the mortgagors were very willing to scale down the

¹ Brunner and Lorge, *op. cit.*, pages 40-41.

principal since by foreclosure or forced sale they might likely stand to lose more in the end than by the process of adjustment.

2. STRIKES TO INCREASE PRICES. The "holiday" movement, reminiscent of the activities of the Farmers Union, the Equity, and the Alliance in earlier years, sought to withhold products from markets by force, if necessary, in order to coerce the dealers into giving higher prices. The Farmers' Holiday Association in the midwest became notorious for its efforts along this line. It was active in the early efforts of dairy farmers in the Chicago milk-shed to strike against lower prices because of increased supplies. Similar strikes were carried on in the New York, the St. Louis and other milk-sheds. These strikes led not only to drawing public attention to the problems causing the difficulties but also to settling them through the development of more equitable marketing schemes.²

3. FARM LABOR STRIKES. Farm labor strikes came at a later period—following the drouth and heavy migration from the plains to the West coast. Farm labor never has been very effectively organized in the United States probably because (1) most farm laborers, particularly in the past, have moved relatively easily into tenant and owner classes, (2) farm laborers have not had the cohesiveness or group-mindedness found among industrial workers, (3) farm laborers are relatively isolated one from the other, making intercommunication difficult, (4) no real issues have arisen sufficiently important to cause a movement for organization of farm laborers, and (5) farm laborers can be displaced fairly easily by machine and family labor in many types of agricultural production.

a. *California strikes.* Agricultural labor did become sufficiently organized in California, however, to carry on a series of strikes in the years 1929 to 1935. Though the situation under which the movement developed was not comparable to the situation of labor in mixed-farming-type areas, it is of real significance to students of organizations among farmers as representing a type of farm labor organization. Most of the strikes occurred on fruit or vegetable farms on which labor conditions were not unlike those found

² *Ibid.*, pages 41-42.

in factories—the laborers were employed in groups and from among itinerant workers who had the opportunity to come together in camps or otherwise. They were not the same as the midwest farm labor groups who were often so much a part of the individual farm organization as to have a personal interest in it.

The strikes in California grew out of discontent arising from low wages or drastic wage reductions. Two strikes took place in the Imperial Valley in 1930, both spontaneous movements among Philippine workers employed as vegetable and fruit pickers and American workers employed in the packing sheds. Efforts were made by Trade Union leaders to organize the farm laborers during and after the strikes, but they failed. Leaders who called mass meetings were arrested, halls were raided, and some convictions were secured through the violation of the criminal Syndicalism Law.³

Small, spontaneous strikes in 1931 and 1932 were followed by uprisings of communist workers, culminating in the Vacaville strike of fruit workers which held out for about 60 days against formidable intimidation, beatings, and persecutions. It was followed by the pea pickers' strike in the DeCoto-Hayward section in which 3,000 workers were protesting against a wage rate of 12 cents an hour. It resulted in wage increases although one man was killed and many injured. One thousand cherry pickers at Mountain View and Sunnyside followed suit. The leaders were arrested, but wages were increased. Apricot workers, peach pickers, and grape workers struck or threatened to strike and made gains. In August, 1933, 1,200 workers, mostly Italians, took part in the first well-organized strike, and considerable progress was made in organizing and disciplining the strikers.

Following the strike in August, 1933, a union was organized along industrial lines with local units, section and district organizers, secretaries, and various committees. Objectives included 75 cents an hour for skilled labor, an 8-hour day, time and a half for overtime, decent homes and sanitary conditions, payment of wages by the hour, abolition of piecework and contract labor, equal

³ Carey McWilliams, "Factories in the Field," pages 213-214.

pay for women workers, and abolition of child labor in agriculture. Then followed the winning of a strike at Tagus Ranch, one of the largest fruit ranches in the state, and strikes at Chico, Fresno, Gridley, Merced, Oxnard, Sacramento, San Diego, San Jose, Tulare, and other places. At Fresno, 6,000 workers were out in September. Vigilante groups were formed, and many arrests were made.⁴

The strike of the San Joaquin Valley cotton pickers in October 1933, was the largest of its kind in American history and lasted 24 days. Cotton pickers demanded 90 cents a hundred pounds; growers were willing to advance the price from 40 to 60 cents, but though several conferences were held no agreement was reached. Approximately 18,000 workers joined the strike, 5,000 migrating to a 40-acre camp outside Corcoran—the headquarters. After riots between strikers and growers, mass murders, threats, and entreaties by the governor, the Mexican ambassador, and others of influence, and orders by state health officials to evacuate, compromises were worked out, and the strikers went back to work.⁵

Other strikes followed in 1934, and police, American Legionnaires, "irate citizens," and growers used many forcible means of discouragement. The Commission of the National Labor Board found that "Constitutional rights had been openly disregarded by the law-enforcement agencies in the valley; that the right of free speech and assembly had been wholly suppressed; that excessive bail had been demanded of arrested strikers; that the State Vagrancy Law had been prostituted; and that a Federal Court injunction had been flouted."⁶

The magnitude of the movement is indicated by the fact that all the fruit, vegetable, and cotton crops were affected; 50,000 workers were involved with a total of 37 recorded strikes. "The gain to the workers, in terms of money, cannot be calculated, but it amounted to millions of dollars."⁷

⁴ *Ibid.*, pages 215-219.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pages 219-224.

⁶ *Ibid.*, page 225.

⁷ *Ibid.*, page 229.

b. *Resistance to the California strikes.* To combat the rise of organized farm labor, growers formed their own direct action group. "In 1933 the California Farm Bureau Federation and the State Chamber of Commerce appointed a joint committee to study farm-labor conditions in the State."⁸ As a result, the Associated Farmers' Organization was formed "to cooperate to harvest crops in case of strikes and to offer their services to the local sheriff immediately as special deputies in the event of disorders arising out of picketing and sabotage."⁹ By 1937, branch offices were located in practically every county of the state. In December of that year the organization was enlarged and called the United Farmers of the Pacific Coast, allegedly having members in Arizona, Oregon and Washington. "The organization was formed, according to the president, to fight Communism, but today, by force of national developments, it is necessarily opposing unionization of labor on any basis. . . . The program of the organization is being converted from a defensive to an aggressive plan of action . . . a permanent organization dedicated to prevent the unionization of farm labor."¹⁰

4. ORGANIZATION AMONG FARM TENANTS. The organization of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union was in the nature of a strike. It was a protest movement against landlords, particularly in the South, who had taken all AAA benefits. As it grew it defended the civil liberties of its members and established their right to organize, it secured for tenants in general full payments due on benefit awards for conformity to the cotton acreage program, and it led day laborers in strikes for higher wages and has agitated nationally for better living and working conditions for tenants and laborers.¹¹

5. EFFORTS TO UNIONIZE FARMERS. Labor leaders have made several efforts to insure that all handling a product belong to some

⁸ *Ibid.*, page 231.

⁹ *Ibid.*, page 231.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, page 262.

¹¹ Rockwell C. Smith, "The Church in Our Town." Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1945, pages 85-6.

form of union. The history of efforts to bring farmers into the ranks of labor unions is that most of such efforts have failed. The United Mine Workers, however, under the leadership of John L. Lewis, made renewed efforts in recent years to organize farmers, particularly dairy farmers. UMWA District 50, for example, made plans to include all dairy farmers in its district in its plan of union organization. They claimed the right to unionize dairy farmers since these farmers lived in their district and since they were engaged in producing milk, a by-product of which—casein—is used in industrial processes in combination with coal by-products.¹²

A similar effort has been recorded in Illinois in which labor unions were allegedly endeavoring to legally force owner-operators of small businesses to join their organizations. Efforts to force employees of filling stations to join teamsters' unions involved farmers' cooperatives and caused cessation of deliveries of supplies by the cooperatives until the dispute was settled. Deliveries were resumed when union employees were hired to run the filling stations.^{12a}

Movements Calling for Government Action

With the passing of the depth of the 1930-40 depression and the development of Federal agencies, sporadic direct action movements subsided. "The emphasis was upon specific programs."¹³ The Farm Credit Administration created machinery to arbitrate or help scale down debts, the Farm Security Administration developed means to allow grants and loans to distressed farmers, and the Agricultural Adjustment Administration was given authority to provide loans on stored crops, make payments for crop loss through disaster, pay for conservation measures and for crop-land reduction.

¹² *Ibid.*, page 89.

^{12a} "Fight Rural Union Drive." *Prairie Farmer*, Illinois Edition, Aug. 31, 1946.

¹³ Theodore W. Schultz, "Redirecting Farm Policy." New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943, page 7.

1. **PRODUCTION CONTROL.** The "Act to Relieve the Existing National Economic Emergency by Increasing Agricultural Purchasing Power," commonly called the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933, empowered the President, through the Secretary of Agriculture (1) to take measures to increase agricultural purchasing power by raising farm income, (2) to lighten the load of farm mortgages, and (3) to make adjustments in the national currency and credit. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration was set up in the United States Department of Agriculture specifically to carry out the first of these three mandates. The powers of the AAA were directed "toward economically balanced production of agricultural commodities on the one hand, looking to a fair share of the national income for farmers, and on the other hand, a system of distributing farm products that will be economically sound."¹⁴

a. *Chief purposes.* The first Act, passed May 12, 1933, provided (1) for an adjustment of production of any or all of seven basic commodities—cotton, wheat, corn, hogs, rice, tobacco, and milk and its products, (2) for benefit payments to farmers who signed contracts agreeing to cooperate in the adjustment program, (3) for levying taxes on the first processing of the domestically-consumed portion of any of the seven basic commodities that were below exchange value as a means of raising funds for the benefit payments to cooperating farmers, (4) for marketing agreements between the Secretary of Agriculture and the processors and handlers of farm commodities as a means of regulating the marketing of the commodities and increasing producers' incomes, and (5) for organizing associations of producers to carry out the programs authorized under the act.¹⁵

b. *The system of organization.* Associations of producers were formed in every county in which the program was carried on;

¹⁴ "The Agricultural Adjustment Act and Its Operation," G-1, AAA, USDA, 1934, page 5.

¹⁵ "Achieving a Balanced Agriculture," Division of Special Reports, Office of Information, U. S. D. A., 1940, page 13. See also "Farmers in a Changing World." Washington: U. S. Printing Office, 1940, The Yearbook of Agriculture, U. S. D. A., pages 216-23.

those signing contracts to adjust production were the members. After a year under the act nearly 3,000,000 farmers were participating in adjustment programs.¹⁶ Signers were called in to community meetings to elect their community committeemen, usually three in number in each community. These committeemen were then called in to a county meeting to elect a county committee, usually of five, upon whom most of the administrative work for the county fell. Theoretically these leaders, selected by the co-operators, were to perform two functions: (1) to aid the Secretary of Agriculture in carrying out the provisions of the act, and (2) to be the medium through which the wishes of the farmers as to needed changes in the act would be carried to the Secretary. Actually, the committees were called upon, not only to perform these functions, but also, (1) to explain the workings of the act to their neighbors, and (2) administer the act in the counties and communities, being guided by administrative rulings and instructions coming from the office of the Secretary of Agriculture. Thus a huge organization of farmers was set up throughout the nation as a direct-action agency for the administration of the act.

c. *Changes in the act.* In 1936 the processing tax and production control provisions of the act were declared unconstitutional by the Federal Supreme Court. The Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act of 1936 was then summarily passed. Its provisions were designed to protect the land against erosion, shift from undesirable and unprofitable to better uses of land, to expand and improve forest resources, and to carry on other conservation practices. The act did not provide effectively for acreage control. The act of 1938, therefore, was passed to continue the conservation program, but it also provided for loans on stored crops, made possible parity payments from funds in the Federal treasury for adjusting production on five of the basic crops, and provided for crop insurance on wheat.

To insure the control of production and to prevent ruinous surpluses, the act gave producers of any of the five basic commodi-

¹⁶ Chester C. Davis, "The Farmers Run Their Show," G-18, AAA U. S. D. A., 1934, page 1.

ties—cotton, tobacco, corn, wheat, and rice—the right to vote marketing quotas. When supplies of any of these commodities become excessive, marketing quotas can be forced upon all the producers of any of the basic crops if farmers producing the particular commodity in question approved establishing marketing quotas by a two-thirds majority of those voting in a referendum. Quotas have been voted on cotton, tobacco and wheat. Thus, it is felt, the principle of farmer-control is employed; first because, not half, but two-thirds majority of producers of a commodity voting is required for imposition of quotas, and second because the elected representatives of the farmers administer the act.

The same pattern of community and county committee organization of cooperating farmers has been maintained throughout. About 100,000 farmer representatives, who are paid a per diem and expenses for their participation, operated the conservation and adjustment program. These elected representatives were looked to more and more for action in helping make adjustments. For example, the 1940-41 defense emergency called for rapid action to increase certain food supplies in the nation and for shipment to the Allied countries at war. At first the Agricultural Extension Service was asked to put on an educational campaign to get farmers to increase production of these foods. More recently the order had been for setting up USDA County War Boards, with the chairman of the AAA committee as chairman. Thus, the county and community committees of the AAA, working with other agencies, visited every farmer, urging increases in the coming year in the necessary foods.

This shift from primary dependence upon educational agencies to the supplementary programs of action agencies to secure adjustments in agriculture is significant and may have far-reaching results. If the two types of agencies can cooperate fully to help farmers make effective short and long time adjustments and thus serve to protect agriculture against too drastic changes in the system of operation, the results over a long-time period may be salutary. The operation of one agency without the help of the other is almost certain to cause conflict and ineffectiveness on the part

of both. Even with the fullest of cooperation it may be that even more drastic measures may have to be taken similar to those in wartime and those contemplated in Great Britain.¹⁷

2. OTHER AGENCIES FOR DIRECT ACTION. The Farm Program of the 'thirties came to be known as much more than the Agricultural Adjustment program. It included rural electrification, farm security, farm credit, conservation, and plans for use of agricultural surpluses by low-income groups. Each of these merits discussion here.

a. *The Farm Credit Administration.* The governmental machinery for furnishing farmers with adequate credit developed over a period of years and came to full fruition through government financed production credit associations, farm mortgage loans through local units of national farm loan associations, and credit for cooperatives through banks for cooperatives. These associations were operated as cooperatives and, when the loans from the government are liquidated, became the property of the farmer members.

b. *The Rural Electrification Administration.* Federal loans were also provided farmers who wished to set up cooperative projects to buy or manufacture electricity through the Rural Electrification Administration. By the close of 1939, total allotments of 373 millions of dollars were made for the construction of 210,000 miles of line to serve about 700,000 farm families, bringing electricity to more than 25 per cent of the American farms. By 1947 two-fifths of the farms were electrified; only 10.9 per cent were electrified in 1935. Cooperatives set up under the program have been governmentally supervised until the loans are paid off, when they become the property of the farmer members.¹⁸

¹⁷ County agricultural committees in England, which "resemble the AAA committees in many ways" had extensive powers in the wartime period, even taking over farms not properly farmed and farming them so as to secure the maximum production from them. See Paul H. Appleby, "Report on British Trip." Inside BAE, Vol. II, No. 11, Oct. 1941, page 10. Proposals have been made to carry this system over into the peacetime period.

¹⁸ "Achieving a Balanced Agriculture," *op. cit.*, page 59-60.

c. *The Farm Security Administration.* Farm security among low-income farmers was improved through loans for the purchase of seed, feed, and equipment, and for land, looking to ownership. Farmers receiving loans were aided by representatives of the Farm Security Administration to make farm and home plans which are designed to insure good farm and home practices. This in turn made for better incomes and regular payments on the loans. The FSA clients were encouraged to set up their own production, marketing, and consumers cooperatives. In some instances a large acreage of land had been purchased by the government, subdivided into smaller tracts, and families settled upon them; these, called subsistence homesteads, were a part of the FSA program.

d. *Soil Conservation Service.* Conservation of soil resources was carried on, not only through the AAA program, but also by the Soil Conservation Service. The feature of the program of chief concern here is that of forming Soil Conservation Districts. Farm owners in any area (community, county or similar area) under state laws enacted in most of the states, voted to set up a district. A petition for a hearing signed by the owners of ten per cent or more of the land was enough to enable the calling of a hearing to determine interest in the venture. Usually, educational meetings were held to explain the nature and functions of the proposed district. If, then, 51 per cent of the land owners voted to set up a district, it was legally organized. Once the district was organized the owners could agree on certain soil conserving practices which should be carried out on every farm. By passing an ordinance all the producers in the district could be forced to carry on the practice or practices agreed and passed upon. Expert agronomists were made available to help the farmers of the district determine necessary practices and to carry them out.

e. *Surplus Commodities Disposal.* Plans for use of farm surpluses included food stamp plans, school lunch programs, low-cost milk programs, cotton stamp plans, and similar direct-action services which lack of space here does not permit discussing.¹⁹

¹⁹ "Achieving a Balanced Agriculture," *op. cit.*, pages 32 to 42.

Of significance in most of these programs was the combination of government action with farmer-group action. The effect of such a combination on the initiative as well as the welfare of farmers is of primary concern. The working together of government agencies with virile, functioning farmer groups has possibilities of solving problems in agriculture which were almost impossible of solution previously. For example, farmers working individually and in an economic system of land operation which encourages exploitation of the soils have not been able to maintain soil fertility and prevent erosion. Farmers organized and with the help of government agencies seem to be gaining on this problem. The danger lies in too much governmental domination. The presence of the right to form protest groups may suffice to keep the governmental agencies sensitive and possibly, submissive to farmers' wishes and needs. Some illustrations of what may be called retaliatory direct-action movements may suffice to indicate the possibility of such farmer-group control.

3. RETALIATORY MOVEMENTS. The Corn-Belt Liberty League was one of the first movements to protest the activities of the AAA in the Midwest. It was short-lived, being sponsored, without a doubt, by partisan interests. Its chief publicly stated objective was to protest allotments—its supporters claimed they couldn't raise enough corn for feed if they signed up with the AAA program. The leaders expressed the fear that the AAA "was a disastrous step towards Communism or some other horrible form of planned economic system."²⁰ This was not a serious "uprising" and has significance only in so far as it illustrates the possibility of similar movements among farmers, if they are given the proper grievance.

Reaction against marketing quotas were more widespread. Protest groups against 49c wheat penalties were reported to have been active in a dozen states in 1941. Though 560,000 of the one million wheat growers voted more than 75 per cent for the marketing quotas, "few knew that Congress had changed the wheat

²⁰ Margaret James, "Corn Belt Liberty League," class term-paper, U. of Ill., Coll. of Agr., 1939, unpublished.

penalty from 15c to 49c a bushel five days before. When they found out protest came quick. In Michigan one farmer said 'pooh' and burned his wheat in the field. In Ohio, Irving Baker announced he would push a suit against the quota straight through to the Supreme Court. . . . The Wheat Protest Association was formed in Indiana. . . . Pennsylvania farmers set up an organization tentatively known as the Farmers' Protective League. Other groups sprang up in Ohio, Illinois, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Missouri. . . . On July 21 the Department of Agriculture backed down enough to say that excess wheat could be sold without paying the penalty this year, providing the quantity is deducted from the 1942 allotment."²¹ A healthy state of democracy exists when a voluntary direct-action group can cause a governmental direct-action agency to change a policy.

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- SMITH, ROCKWELL C., "The Church in Our Town." Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1945, Chapter VII.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What were the chief forms of direct action taking place in the first part of the fourth decade?
2. What was the "holiday" movement? What other movements grew out of it?

²¹"The Wheat Penalty Protest," *The Farm Journal and Farmer's Wife*, Sept. 1941, page 13.

3. Why has farm labor never been effectively organized?
4. What was the nature of the labor strikes in California; what did they accomplish?
5. Give the chief functions of the AAA as it was first put into operation.
6. In what ways were farmers brought into the administration of the Act?
7. What changes have been made in the Act since 1933?
8. What is the chief objective of the Farm Credit Administration; how are farmers brought into control of the organizations growing out of the operation of the FCA?
9. Discuss the part farmers play in the operation of the FSA; the REA; the SCS.
10. What are the chief means by which farmers can retain the power of policy making relative to governmentally-sponsored direct-action agencies?

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Trace the events leading up to the establishment of county farm debt adjustment committees. Brunner and Lorge.
2. Outline in some detail the grievances of farm labor in California; describe efforts to prevent future disturbances. McWilliams.
3. Study the provision of the AAA to determine the extent to which farm relief proposals made by farmers' organizations during the '20s were made a part of the Act. Black and "Achieving a Balanced Agriculture" and "Farmers in a Changing World."
4. Study the nature of cooperatives organized under the FCA to determine the extent to which control over policy making is in the hands of farmers. FCA Bulletins.
5. What are the conditions in the AAA making it possible for production adjustment, up or down; production control; the making of rules or regulations by governmental officials; control of the system by farmers. What influence can be exerted by farmers organizations such as the Grange, the Farm Bureau or the Farmers Union? "Achieving a Balanced Agriculture," "Farmers in a Changing World," and Schultz, first and second parts.

EXERCISE

Examine further the situation in your own community to determine the effects of the direct action movements described in this chapter and the part the farmers of the community have taken in these activities. Discuss in some detail the operation of these agencies in the community; just how do they operate among the farmers of the community?

PART III

Present Day Farmers' and Rural Organization

American farmers' and rural organizations wield a real influence on modern-day local, state, and national affairs, especially as they affect people who live in rural areas. Some influence is being brought to bear by the organizations on international affairs.

In many counties and in some communities farmers' organizations exert a major influence on the lives of rural people. In some, other types of organizations, particularly the rural institutions such as the school or the church, are the major influence on the lives of the people. All types of farmers' and rural organizations must, therefore, be studied in order to understand the various organizational forces operative in the average rural community.

First attention is given in this section to the national farmers' organizations which have had such a significant influence on policy-making relating to agriculture and rural life. Attention is given, also, to the work of agricultural agencies, which have come to loom so large in agricultural affairs, and women's and youth groups, which have become increasingly important in the life of farm people. The organizational aspects of the farm family, the school, local government, and the church are given study, for they are very much part and parcel of farm life.

It is well to remember, too, that cooperatives have become more and more a factor, especially in the economic life of farm people, and they are beginning to influence the social and educational aspects of the lives of farmers and their families. These organizations are becoming a real part of the work and life of farm people.

CHAPTER XI

THE GRANGE

Most venerable of the farmers' organizations in the United States is the National Grange or, as it is less popularly known, the Patrons of Husbandry. Seven men organized the first Grange in Washington, D. C., on Dec. 4, 1867,¹ and it has persisted through more than three-quarters of a century. It now ranks as the second largest organization for farmers in the United States; for many years it was the largest farmers' organization in the United States.

The persistency of the Grange has been attributed by its secretary to the fact that it is a *fraternity*; that it is a *representative legislative agency* for rural folks; that it has sponsored many *cooperative services* that farm folks have today; that the cost of membership *has always been low*; that it has always been a *community organization*; that it has been and is *social, entertaining, and educational*; that it has always embraced both *age and youth*; that it is really a *family organization*; that people look upon it as a *permanent organization*; and that it has been a *clean, moral institution*.²

Membership in the Grange

All membership in the Grange, as in other farmers' organizations, is on a purely voluntary basis. The Grange is "entirely independent without affiliations with any other group or institution; and no check-off system for building new membership from patronage rebates is used."³ Though the actual membership is somewhat larger than the paid-up membership, the most accurate figures available are those reported to the national secretary:

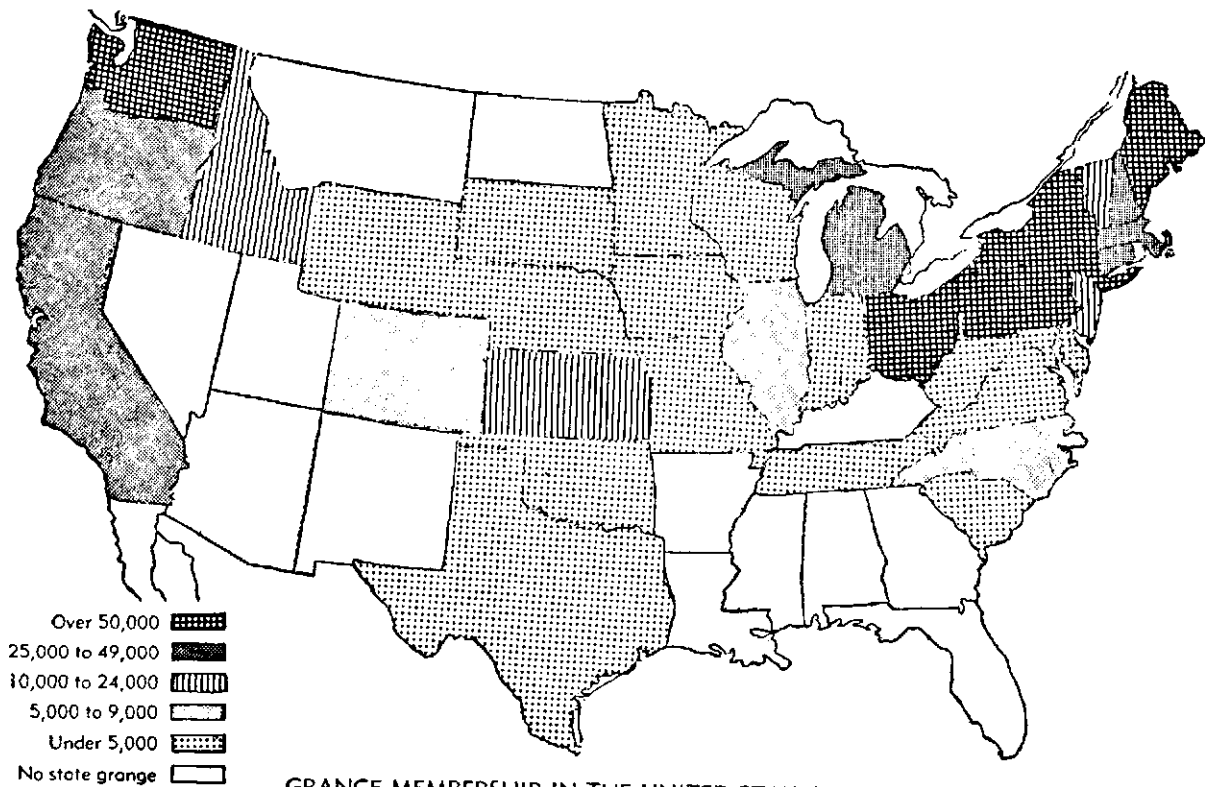
1. NUMBERS. As reported to the national secretary memberships from 36⁴ of the 48 states stood at more than 750,000 in 1946,

¹ Hon. D. Wyatt Aiken, "The Grange: Its Origin, Progress, and Educational Purposes." Booklet No. 8, The National Grange Monthly.

² The National Grange Monthly, November, 1941.

³ Personal communication from Harry A. Caton, Secretary, The National Grange, Dec. 21, 1946.

⁴ In addition to these there are a number of Granges located in states with no State Grange organizations.



GRANGE MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNITED STATES — 1946

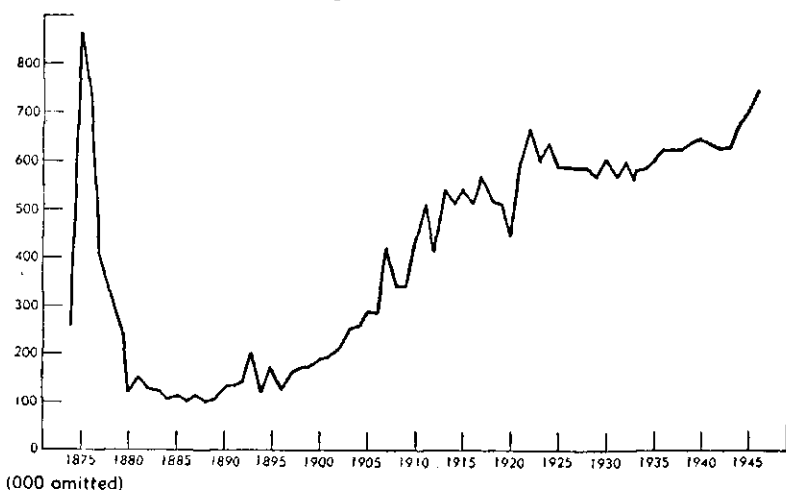
exceeded only by the membership in 1775 of over 858,000. Two states had more than 100,000 members: New York with 140,000 and Ohio with 102,000 in 1946. Three others reported more than 50,000: Pennsylvania with 67,000, Maine with 55,000, and Washington with 53,000. More than 10,000 members were reported from California (32,000), Connecticut (27,000), Idaho (14,000), Kansas (14,000), Massachusetts (47,000), Michigan (27,000), New Hampshire (32,000), New Jersey (19,000), Oregon (30,000), Vermont (17,000).

Note that the bulk of the Grange membership is found in these fifteen states, most of which are in the northeast or north-central and the far northwest part of the country, principally the states of Washington, California, and Oregon. In these states there is a goodly portion of the farm population represented in the Grange, with somewhat near a majority in the states reporting more than 100,000 members.⁵

2. TRENDS. The trend in membership of the Grange is not unlike the trend for many rural organizations: a tremendous peak soon after organization, then a precipitous decline; with a leveling off and gradual progress forward and upward from then on. This, indeed, has been the trend for Grange membership; the first peak was in 1875, as has been stated, followed by a sharp decline to a low point in 1880 and a gradual loss until 1889. From that time onward the general trend has been upward, with minor breaks from 1907 to 1908, from 1912 to 1913, and a more serious break from 1917 to 1920, the period of the organization of state farm bureaus. There was a significant rise, however, from 1920 to 1922, when the American Farm Bureau Federation was getting under way. There

⁵ In Cortland county, New York, for example, 45 per cent of the husbands out of 788 farmers' families are members of the Grange. See W. A. Anderson, "Farm Families in the Grange." Published by the Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station, Ithaca, New York, March, 1943. See also "The National Grange," Year Book of Agriculture, 1940, page 948, showing that considerably more than half of the Grange's 1940 membership were in New England, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Ohio. "New England, with 150,000 members, is often referred to as 'the Gibraltar of the Order.'"

was somewhat of a drop from 1922 to 1932 and a steady increase from then on, in spite of the depression and other circumstances.⁶ Most other farmers' organizations suffered severe reductions in membership, especially in the early years of the depression period, reflecting their dependence upon economic conditions for strong memberships. The stability of the Grange was doubtless due in large part to its system of organization.



The national Grange Membership from 1875 to 1945, by years. From records of the National Secretary, Harry A. Caton, Coshocton, Ohio.

The Grange Organizational Plan

The basic organization is the community unit, called the subordinate grange. In order for a subordinate grange to be organized it must have a minimum of 13 members—at least 4 of each sex. Application for a charter is made to the State Grange and, if none exists, to the National Grange. It was necessary that four degrees be conferred on the 13 or more members before a charter was granted.

1. DEVELOPMENT OF THE SYSTEM. After 1874, the admission age was set at 16; it is now 14 years of age. Fifteen locals organize

⁶ Caton, *op. cit.*

a State Grange. At first, there were no county granges, but soon they were permitted and were called Pomona Granges. In the beginning Masters and Matrons of subordinate granges and, in some states, Pomona Granges could become members of State Granges; also, Masters and Matrons of State Granges became members of the National Grange. At the 24th Annual Session, provision was made for Juvenile Granges to include children from 8 to 14 years of age.

The system of degrees was related at one time to representation in higher orders. In the national order, the two houses were the Upper House and the Lower House. Only seventh degree members—those conferred by the National Grange—could be members of the Upper House. Sixth degree members—those conferred in the State Grange—could be in the Lower House. At first the fifth, sixth, and seventh degrees could be conferred only on those having “gone through the chairs.” Later, any fourth degree member could be eligible for the higher degrees. The Senate—the highest governing body—was made up of seventh degree members and had joint control with the House. The Senate was later abolished to give members of the National Grange complete control.

2. OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES. The officers of the granges (each grange has a full set) include the Master, the Overseer, the Secretary, the Chaplain, the Lecturer, the Steward, the Assistant Steward, the Gatekeeper, Ceres, Pomona, Flora, and Lady Assistant Steward. Deputies may also be appointed to organize subordinate granges and to keep watch over weak ones. The Master is a member of the Executive Committee and the administrative head of the order. The Lecturer—called “the heart of the Grange”—is in charge of programs to instruct people inside and outside of the order. The Gatekeeper’s duty is to remind all that the order is open only to those having a professional interest in agriculture.⁷

The constitution of any grange can be amended by two-thirds vote of the members or, in higher orders, of delegates. Resolutions submitted by subordinate granges or by members of the State or

⁷ Wiest, *op. cit.*, pages 386-388.

National Granges make up the work of the respective state and national meetings, except for giving degrees.

Each grange has a full list of committees so that every member may serve on some committee. Committees are usually appointed on agriculture, auditing, claims and grievances, constitution, credentials, education, finance, foreign relations, forestry, home economics, insurance, master's address, production and distribution, taxation, and other matters of current issue. The report of the Master, which is either written or passed upon by a committee, gives the work of the Grange and its position on economic, political, and social questions.

3. ORGANIZATIONAL DIVISIONS OF THE GRANGE. The Grange set-up comprises four distinct divisions, built one upon the other in logical fashion:

a. *The Subordinate Granges.* The local neighborhood or community units, called subordinates, usually meet twice a month. The regular meetings are open to members only and include a business session, discussion of timely questions of public interest, a carefully prepared educational hour, and wholesome entertainment and recreational features. Four beautiful degrees are conferred, based on the seasons of the year and symbolically applied to the corresponding states of human life. Although Grange business is transacted behind closed doors, the literary program is frequently open to the public. All Grange activities have for their purpose the development of leadership, the improvement of community and rural life, defense of the interests of agriculture and unselfish promotion of the national welfare.

b. *The Pomona Grange.* Subordinate Granges within a given district are grouped together, on a county basis or otherwise, into Pomona Granges, which hold quarterly or monthly meetings. . . . Pomona activities feature educational and community work, and cooperative undertakings are frequently sponsored. The fifth degree constitutes the ritualistic jurisdiction of Pomona Granges.

c. *The State Grange.* The State Grange is a delegate body, representing subordinate and Pomona Granges, and composed of both men and women on equal footing. With annual sessions con-

tinuing several days, State Granges consider important matters of legislation and public policy, including taxation, roads, marketing of crops, community welfare and related subjects. Inasmuch as State Grange policies originate in the lower units of the Order and are conveyed through their delegates, this branch is peculiarly expressive of Grange thought and wishes of an entire state. At these annual sessions, the sixth degree of the Order is conferred.

d. *The National Grange.* This is the parent branch of the Order and constitutes one of the articulate voices of the organized American farmer. Voting representation is limited to two delegates from each Grange state, the master and wife, but all business sessions of the National Grange are open to any subordinate Grange member in good standing. As the supreme legislative body of the Grange, the logical development of its policies is secure, coming up to the National Grange through the orderly channels of Subordinate, Pomona, and State units, consequently embodying the best judgment of the membership. . . . National Grange sessions continue nine days and each year evolve a concise and emphatic program, later carried back for action to the respective state and local groups.

At the annual session of the National Grange one day is given to conferring the seventh degree. . . . Enormous classes gather from all parts of the nation for this annual convocation, the total in 1947 being over 18,000.

e. *The Juvenile Grange.* Believing that the future of a nation depends upon the training of its children, the Grange setup also includes the juvenile grange, open to the children of the community and a distinct order in itself. They have their own ritual and degree work; conduct an educational hour at their meetings; carry on wholesome social activities and even undertake community projects—all under the direction of a competent adult, known as the matron, selected by the subordinate grange which has jurisdiction over the juvenile. . . . The greater part of the children "graduate" into the parent Grange when they reach the age of 14 years.⁸

⁸ "The Grange Blue Book." Nat'l Grange Pub. Bureau, Springfield, Mass.

Local Organization

The foundation of the Grange, as indicated before, is the subordinate grange. Here members come in family groups to carry on the work of the grange, to conduct discussion, to have educational and entertainment programs, and to play and act together. Subordinate granges offer the most ideal opportunity for working out democratic processes, for developing leadership, and for creating new ideas and attitudes among the mass of the members. They promote projects for individual and community betterment and develop the leaders who run the county, state, and national granges.

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF STRONG SUBORDINATES. Probably the most difficult organizational task of leaders of the Grange is to keep the subordinate granges active and functioning and to establish new ones. If the subordinate granges are functioning well in a state, the work of the state granges is made more effective. Hence state granges provide deputies to organize new granges, and give training and leadership to granges needing help. Considerable personal aid is also given by state officers and indirect aid by *The National Grange Monthly* and other publications of national officers.

2. THE FUNCTIONING OF THE SUBORDINATE GRANGE. Some light is thrown on the work of the Grange in community life in studies made in several states. In Ohio, the Grange is reported to be the largest organization of Ohio farmers. A rule that not more than one subordinate grange be established per township has been set up; the number per county thus varies from one to 28. Most subordinates in Ohio meet twice a month—some, weekly. Many own their own halls. Their programs are made up of ritual; fellowship; mutual aid; sociability through recreation, dinners, picnics, games, dramatics, music, and exchange programs; education through discussions, debates, lectures, tours, and exhibits; legislative activities; and commercial activities through cooperative purchasing, cooperative selling, and selling insurance. Recently increased emphasis has been placed on the lecture hour and hence on schooling Grange lecturers. In the state, the cooperative business program, particularly insurance, has grown, and increased

attention has been paid to public questions and legislation bearing on agriculture and country life.⁹

Reports of subordinates to the state granges show the types of activity carried on. In Illinois, the activities reported include card parties, dances, plays, observation of "Go-to-Church Sunday," picnics, local fairs, and open meetings. They also contribute to Red Cross and War Relief, conduct canning contests, sell insurance, and donate the use of the hall for 4-H club, farm bureau, and extension meetings. Activities to provide sociability, raise money for the unit, or contribute to some community welfare project are also developed.

3. THE WORK OF STATE GRANGES. The state granges, through their committees, recommend cooperation with the Department of Agriculture, Vocational Agriculture, Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, and producer organizations; protection of the present status of life insurance companies; universal enforcement of the Noxious Weed Eradication Act. In Illinois, for example, resolutions were drawn up by various committees to be submitted to the National Grange: to see that producers of dairy products have an equal voice in any policy-making body relating to the U. S. Public Health Code, with particular reference to grade "A" milk; that any federal aid given to schools be under the full control of the state to which aid is given, concurring with the National Grange in opposing federal control of education; to oppose peacetime military conscription; to oppose the Union practice of stopping and molesting trucks and drivers entering large cities with livestock and products.¹⁰

National Program

The program of the National Grange reflects the wishes of the state Granges, and they, in turn, reflect the resolutions of the county and subordinate Granges, as has been indicated above. Grange progress can be measured, somewhat, by the nature of the program

⁹ C. E. Lively, "Some Rural Social Agencies in Ohio." Bulletin 529, Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station, 1933, pages 31-33.

¹⁰ Journal of Proceedings, 74th Annual Session, Illinois State Grange, 1945.

—how it changes to meet changing needs—especially as it is expressed in the utterances of the officers. The national policy, position and, therefore, the program growing out of these is mirrored in the annual address of the National Master:

1. POSITION ON NATIONAL POLICIES. The position of the Grange is shown in the 1947 Report of the 81st Annual Session of the National Grange:

a. Agricultural policy.

(1) Land use. Have one governmental agency in the USDA to develop and integrate a soil conservation policy co-operating with and using all other state and Federal agencies. Provide direct payments on materials for jobs farmers cannot do or should not be expected to do. Improve leases. Adjust agricultural credit to encourage conservation. Adopt by majority vote, Land-Use Regulations to protect resources.

(2) Forestry conservation. Extend technical advice, expand public aid, provide proper credit, encourage cooperation, extend research, improve tax laws, and install adequate reforestation.

(3) Research. Provide for more production and marketing research.

(4) Price protection. Include farm labor in index of things farmers use in production; use the moving average price of most recent 5-10 years to equate relationships of commodity prices; continue use of 1910-14 base, pending the perfection and adoption of a sound income formula. Stimulating of consumption using international trade agreements, encouraging cooperative marketing and purchasing associations, using flexible floors under prices, production goals, marketing agreements and quotas when needed, and providing government price supports; all of these will aid in price protection. Base tariff rates on difference between economically sound cost of domestic and foreign production.

(5) Farmer control of government agencies. Establish farmer elected county committees to supervise and administer all state and federal agricultural programs in the county and to help develop policies. House all agricultural agencies at one county location. Establish farmer-elected state committees. Integrate all related programs within the U.S.D.A.

b. Health. Improve accessibility of health facilities for rural people by use of the Hospital Act. More doctors and dentists for rural areas by providing scholarships for rural service and preventing abuse of control over medical student enrollment. A medical cost payment plan enabling all people to secure medical care without undue burden through hospital and medical prepayment plans, establishment of rural health centers, and subsidization of costs to families of inadequate economic means, avoiding the use of the means test, if possible. Work toward an adequate public health program.

c. Education. Provide federal aid only with adequate safeguards, opposing federal control. All funds to be expended for improvement of school work to be under the supervision of the state, with adequate appropriations for agriculture and homemaking in rural communities, and use of federal funds for school lunches only where local funds are inadequate.

d. Cooperatives and taxation. Tax refunds set up as reserves as income to farmers or as income of the cooperative, but oppose efforts to unjustly tax patronage refunds.

e. Rural electrification. Provide adequate loan funds for extending REA plants and facilities, install generating plants at public dams and construct advisable power lines.

f. Extension Service. Oppose proposals to consolidate the Soil Conservation Service and the Extension Service. Make it unlawful for the Extension Service to be financially bound or politically obligated to any farm organization.

g. Public lands. Compensate local governments for taxes lost by federal ownership for purposes which do not give the community greater value than taxes formerly received. Prevent establishing public parks to injury of private or state ownership except to preserve waterways, forests or natural terrain.

h. Social security. Extend old age and retirement benefits to farmer and farm worker when a workable plan can be found.

i. International farm policy. Set up international trade organization without governmental subsidies including international price floors unless they entail losses. Prevent policies which would preclude sound programs in particular countries, but otherwise encourage the FAO in a trade agreements program.

j. United Nations and world peace. Have faith in the U. N. as a means toward world peace. Endorse the Marshall Plan on the basis of aid to those willing to help themselves and through a Loan and Relief Administration, considering the limitation of our own resources. Avoid war but not at the cost of freedom by maintaining adequate armed services on a voluntary enlistment basis, and by helping others while remaining strong at home.

k. Labor legislation. Abide by present laws, especially the Taft-Hartley Act.

l. Farmers' Home Administration. Provide adequate funds to meet eligible farmer and veteran applicants' needs, keeping loans within ability of debtor to pay out.

m. Credit. Establish an independent bipartisan board to administer all credit agencies, retire government capital without impairment of the System, give farmers maximum control and purchase Intermediate Credit Banks.

n. Marketing research. Deal with handling of products from harvest to sale, coordinate private agencies with federal and state agencies, improve private marketing agencies and expand uses for agricultural products.

o. Taxation. Base taxation on ability to pay. Impose least possible restriction on production, employment, new enterprises, and buying power of consumers. Reduce taxes in depression periods and on lower and middle-sized incomes but maintain personal income taxes on a broad base.

p. Price control and inflation. Ration short supplies. Start control with wages of labor as well as with other prices, if needed. Pay off the public debt to control inflation and increase production to meet demand. Encourage profit-sharing.¹¹

The shift to international issues is clear. The Grange Guide Posts emphasize prosperity from production of wealth, compensation for each on what he contributes to general welfare, and protection by government from aggression, both physical and economic.¹²

¹¹ See also Journal of Proceedings, 74th Annual Session, National Grange.

¹² The National Grange Monthly, January, 1948.

The shift to international issues is clear. Some of the pronouncements relative to domestic issues have been changed or modified. Others have remained about the same as they were. Constant adjustments to the times has been necessary but in general the Grange has shown by its resolutions that it is and always has been a conservative organization.

The National Grange Master, both in 1940 and 1946, frowned upon a National Youth Movement separate and apart from state and community activities. He emphasized the value of such groups as the Juvenile Grange, 4-H clubs, vocational agriculture groups, Future Farmers, Boy Scouts, and Camp Fire Girls.

2. ACCOMPLISHMENTS. A summarized chronology of accomplishments of the National Grange includes:

- (1) The fight to make the Secretary of Agriculture a cabinet member (1876-1879);
- (2) A movement for rural free delivery of mail (1896);
- (3) A movement for a parcel post system (1887-1912);
- (4) Support of legislation creating the Postal Savings Banks (1911);
- (5) Support and proper use of land grant money for agricultural and industrial education;
- (6) Support of the Smith-Lever Act (1914);
- (7) Advocacy of the Smith-Hughes Act for Vocational Agriculture (1917);
- (8) Support of the Federal Farm Loan System (1916), Intermediate Credit Banks (1923), Farm Credit Administration (1933), and 4½ per cent interest rates;
- (9) Opposition to colored substitutes for butter (1886-1902) and continued support of measures to aid dairy interests;
- (10) Crusade for Pure Food and Drug Act (1881-1906) and support of similar supplementary legislation;
- (11) Support of legislation to prevent the spread of contagious diseases among domestic animals;

- (12) Support of the establishment of a National Geological Survey, Soil Survey, a National Forestry, and a sound land-use policy ;
- (13) Endorsement of the plan to teach agriculture in public schools ;
- (14) Fight for honest elections and direct representation by the people ;
- (15) Endorsement of woman's suffrage (1875) ;
- (16) Support of the creation of an impartial Tariff Commission and advocacy of the Export Debenture Plan ;
- (17) Campaign for better roads, including "farm-to-market" roads ;
- (18) Support of the move to build the Panama Canal ;
- (19) Encouragement of the building and control of trans-continental railroads ;
- (20) Favoring of restricted immigration (since 1889) ;
- (21) Endorsement of the International Institute of Agriculture ;
- (22) Active opposition to free passes on railroads ;
- (23) Support of national income tax measure (1913) and estate and gift taxes but opposition to sales taxes ;
- (24) Advocacy of direct election of U. S. Senators ;
- (25) Request for the establishment of a weather bureau in the U. S. Department of Agriculture ;
- (26) Favoring of the initiative and referendum ;
- (27) Assistance in passing the law providing money orders ;
- (28) Advocacy of a law providing for federal meat inspection ;
- (30) Support of arbitration and opposition to compulsory military training in times of peace ;
- (30) Favoring of federal appropriations for eradication of insect pests ;
- (31) Recommendation of the establishment of a Bureau of Animal Industry (1890-1924) ;
- (32) Opposition to daylight-saving laws ;

- (33) Support of the Capper-Volstead Act, legalizing cooperative marketing (1922) ;
- (34) The Packers and Stockyards Act (1921) ;
- (35) The Grain Futures Act (1922) ;
- (36) The Lenroot Labor Act, establishing sanitary standards of imported milk and cream (1927) ;
- (37) The Agricultural Adjustment Act (1933) ;
- (38) Enactment of the Wool Products Labeling Act (1940) ;
- (39) Opposition to packing the Supreme Court (1937).¹³

Because of the rapid growth of the Grange, a Declaration of Purposes was demanded, early in its organization history. It was succinctly stated: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."¹⁴ Members were pledged to labor for the good of the order, for their country, and for mankind. Sectionalism was to be wiped out, women were not only to be members but also to hold equal status in the order. Practical agriculture and domestic science were to be taught. The order favored cooperation, shunned partisan politics, opposed large corporate profits, and rejected communism. It was against conflict and litigation to settle disputes, submitting all such arguments to arbitration.¹⁵

3. COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES. The first real impetus to grange organization came as a result of the encouragement of economic cooperation. It was not accepted at first by the National Grange but was urged upon the order by the Minnesota Grange in 1869. By 1874, the demand for cooperation had become so general among grange members that the principle of buying together, selling together, and in general, acting together for mutual protection and advancement¹⁶ was made a part of the Declaration of Purposes. Although efforts were made to encourage only the simpler forms of cooperation, such as buying and selling together under arrangements involving a limited number of agreements, granges speedily entered the field of cooperation on an extensive and varied scale.

¹³ 1940 Proceedings, *op. cit.*, pages 13-14.

¹⁴ Wiest, *op. cit.*, pages 403-404.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pages 403-405.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pages 404-405.

4. EARLY PROJECTS. Milling, manufacturing, and merchandising were undertaken. In West Virginia a factory to build reapers and binders was erected. Woolen mills, grist mills, and creameries were built. Mutual fire insurance companies and Grange exchanges were organized.

5. GRANGE INFLUENCE AS SHOWN BY CHARACTER OF MEMBERS. Whenever the Grange has functioned in a community over a long period of time it has made its influence felt on its members and to an extent on the community. In two New York counties, for example, the characteristics of Grange members were summarized as follows: ¹⁷

- a. Farmers who belong to the Grange are members of more organizations than non-members.
- b. Grange members, compared with non-members, are more often members of the Farm Bureau, Dairymen's League or other milk cooperatives.
- c. Grange members, compared with non-members, more frequently are office holders, serve on committees and participate on programs.
- d. Grange members have more formal schooling than non-members.
- e. They have more household conveniences and have advantage of better communication facilities than non-members.
- f. More grange members, than non-members, are full owners of their farms though farms are of similar size.
- g. Grange members have higher family incomes than non-members.

How much of the above advantages are due to the work of the Grange and how much to the fact that the better farm families join the Grange was not determined. Doubtless, both factors were operative.

¹⁷ Anderson, *op. cit.*, pages 1 and 2.

Summary

In the United States the Grange holds an enviable position because of its venerability, its championship of the worth of the farm family, its high moral standards, its contribution to the social life of farm people, and its constant watchfulness over national policies to assure the farmers a free and unhampered voice in the making of policies. It tends to be a conservative organization; this spirit may prevent the order from carrying out some of the most advanced ideas of its leaders. The organization is said to be primarily social, and educational; this is in its favor. However, its history cannot be studied without the realization that it has great influence on national agricultural policy, on economic cooperative development, and on the maintenance of general public interest in the problems of the American farmer.

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What proportion of the farm families in the United States belong to the Grange? How are they distributed, state by state?
2. What have been the trends in size of membership in the Grange? Can you detect any relationships between these trends and economic, political or social conditions?
3. Discuss the method by which the Grange insures democratic consideration of its policies.
4. What are the functions of the subordinate, the Pomona, the state and the national in the organizational system of the Grange?

5. What provisions are made for youth in the order?
6. What elements in the Grange program do you consider of most importance to farmers? Why?
7. Which of the Grange accomplishments have been of value to the average farm family? In what ways?
8. Why is the subordinate Grange called the foundation of the order?
9. In what ways are subordinate Granges a part of the life of the community in which they are active? What aspect of Grange work might result in isolating the Grange from or in making it compete with other interests in the community?
10. Why is the Grange described as being primarily social and educational? What characteristics of the Grange do you consider of most importance to its success? Why?

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Compare the original and the present organizational systems of the Grange to discover the changes that have come through the years. Buck, Wiest and the Grange Blue Book.
2. Study the resolutions of the National Grange to discover those which have resulted in some form of action in the last decade. National Grange Proceedings, Black and Schmidt.
3. Review the operation of a subordinate Grange: the work of the officers, the method of membership acquisition, the planning and execution of programs, and the carrying out of projects.

EXERCISE

Examine your community to determine (1) evidences of past or present Grange activities and (2) the influence of Grange sponsored policies on farm and rural life in the community.

CHAPTER XII

THE AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

The Farm Bureau has been called a "middle-ground" organization. Its chief emphasis has been upon economic and educational needs of farmers in America. By 1947 it had attained the distinction of being America's largest farm organization with a membership of 1,275,180 in 46 states and Puerto Rico. "Based upon the USDA estimates of 4.1 members in the average farm family, this figure represents over four million people."¹ The American Farm Bureau Federation, organized in 1919, is the youngest of the major farm organizations in the United States, but has become the largest at the present time (1948).

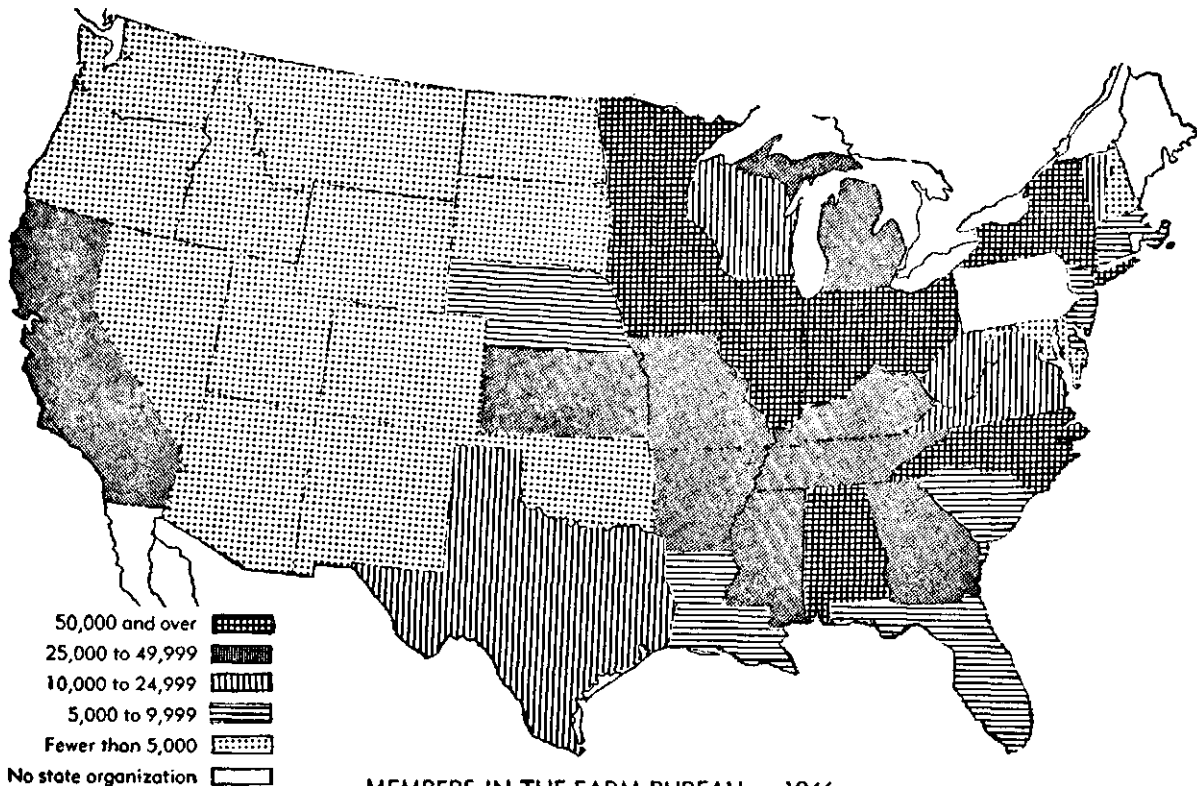
The Membership

The Farm Bureau counts its members largely on the basis of one per family; in some states the one membership is regarded as a family membership.

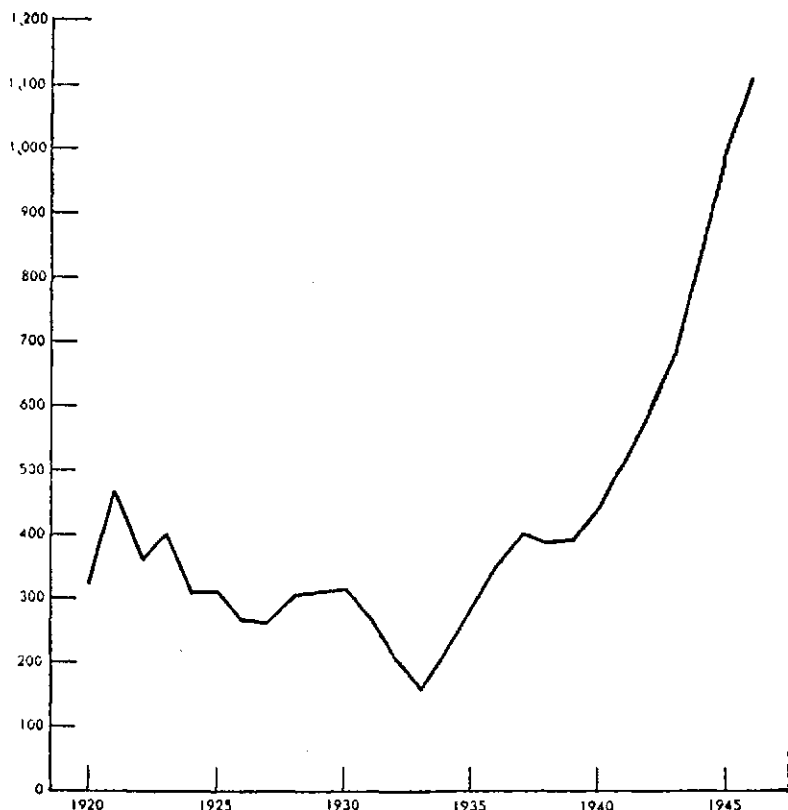
1. NUMBERS OF MEMBERS. The 1,128,259 members in 1946 were fairly well concentrated in the midwest; of the ten states with 45,000 or more members, six—Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Michigan and Ohio—are in the midwest. The south is second in membership strength with the highest membership for the south in Alabama, Georgia, and North Carolina. There is considerable strength of membership in states well distributed over the nation, however, emphasizing the cosmopolitan nature of the organization: Illinois, with over 145,000 members (according to the state report), is the largest state organization of its kind in the world; Iowa has over 100,000 members; New York more than 75,000; California has more than 40,000; and Kansas more than 41,000. Half of the states have 10,000 or more members and only three have fewer than 1,000 members.¹

2. THE TREND IN MEMBERSHIP. The American Farm Bureau Federation has been sensitive to economic changes. Since 1930

¹ R. B. Corbett, "Monthly Report on Membership." Chicago: American Farm Bureau Federation, Nov. 1946.



MEMBERS IN THE FARM BUREAU — 1946



(000 omitted)

Membership in the American Farm Bureau Federation from 1920 to 1946.

the trend line of U. S. farm prices and that of the AFBF have followed the same relative paths: down sharply from 1929 to 1933; up gradually from 1933 to 1937; a second dip from 1937 to 1939; and a sharp rise since 1939. The 1921 membership was the highest until 1941, the trend from that year until 1929 being gradually downward or holding even; 1923 was up; then the trend was down, to 1928, after which there was a small increase to 1930, reflecting economic conditions affecting farmers. Also, the early upsurge for 1920 and 1921 is characteristic of the launching of new organizations.

From 1945 to 1946 only ten states suffered losses in membership—Arizona, Connecticut, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, Utah, Virginia and Wyoming. The largest loss was 7,867 for Mississippi which had 44,558 members in 1945. However, Arizona's loss was much more serious—497—representing more than one-third of the total membership. It is evident that in times of relative prosperity farmers are more easily "sold" farm bureau memberships in all parts of the country than in times of economic stress; that farm bureau dues are one of the first cuts made in times of financial reverses. "In the old days," declared the President, "farmers had only to cope with economic forces; now agriculture constantly is being hit by the impacts of turbulent social and political forces which have arisen as a direct result of the industrialization of our national economy."² As the organization faces a new postwar period of possible depression it can well give attention to the social problems in rural life, as well as the economic problems which have been so prominent in its programs in the past.

The Form of Organization

The farm bureau is organized at county, state, and national levels.³ The national organization is a federation of state farm bureau federations, and agricultural associations, including members, associate members and affiliate members. Members are the state farm bureaus; associate members are county farm bureaus; and affiliate members are national educational organizations of young farm men and young farm women, who are cooperating and associated with agricultural extension or vocational projects and activities. Members and affiliate members have voting delegates who elect the board of directors; associate members have nonvoting delegates. All voting delegates must be members of bona fide farm families.

² Edward A. O'Neal, "Looking Forward." Chicago: American Farm Bureau Federation, Annual Report, 1945, page 1.

³ "Serving More Than 100,000 Farm Families." Chicago: Illinois Agricultural Association, Handbook for Employees, 1945, page 13.

The work of the organization is carried on through the officers, the board of directors, and legal, business, research, legislation, information, and organization departments. A seventh department on home and community work was expanded into a women's affiliated organization, the Associated Women of the American Farm Bureau Federation. This group has its own officers and board of directors.⁴

1. **MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS.** A qualified state must have 500 members. National dues are 50 cents per farm bureau member. The American Farm Bureau Federation does not recognize any membership until the 50 cents is received by the national organization. All figures are checked by a certified public accountant. A state with 500 members is allowed one delegate. A second delegate can be elected when the state has 15,000 members or a major portion of that number.⁵ Hence, for example:

500 members	permit one delegate
7,501 members	permit two delegates
22,501 members	permit three delegates
37,501 members	permit four delegates
52,501 members	permit five delegates

These delegates in annual meeting elect the officers and formulate the policy of the national organization.

2. **THE NATURE OF THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION.** The officers elected include the president and vice-president. The secretary and treasurer are elected by the board of directors. The board of directors is elected by the voting delegates to serve for two years, about half the directors being elected each year. The nation is divided into four main divisions for representation. Each of the northeastern, middlewestern, southern and western regions can have three directors plus one, and not more than two, additional for each 50,000 paid-up members per region. Then, too, each affiliate member has a director. The Secretary of Agriculture and

⁴ "Twenty Years With the American Farm Bureau Federation." Chicago: AFBF publication, 1939.

⁵ Personal communication from R. B. Corbett, Executive Secretary, 1946.

the Extension Director of the U. S. Department of Agriculture may sit in on directors' meetings and take part in the discussions, but they have no vote.

3. THE NATURE OF STATE ORGANIZATIONS. The organization of state and county farm bureaus, unlike the Granges, lacks uniformity. In most cases, however, the state organizations are federations of county farm bureaus. The notable exception is the Illinois organization, which is an association of county farm bureaus with direct individual memberships. County farm bureaus, in turn, lack uniformity even within a state. Some operate as county units with a county board of directors elected at large from the membership; others are broken down into township and community units, each electing a director to the county board. The number of county units in a state varies from 5 in Arizona (1938) to 172 in Texas.

Dues, likewise, vary from state to state. All state farm bureaus, however, pay 50 cents per member to the national organization. In eleven midwest states, total membership dues vary from \$1.50 to \$15.00 per member per year. In the opinion of directors of the farm bureaus in these states, this variation in membership indicates a great variation of opinion as to what the farm bureau is doing or proposes to do. An effort has been made, therefore, to bring dues for members in all states up to \$10.00. By 1945 quite a number of states had increased dues to \$10.00.⁶

Illinois and Ohio have set up dues of more than \$10.00. In Illinois, farm bureau members in all but one or two counties pay \$15.00—\$10.00 to the county, \$4.50 to the state, and 50 cents to the national organization. Nevertheless, Illinois has the largest membership of any state organization—approximately 145,000 in 1947; Iowa in second place has over 100,000 members and \$10.00 dues; New York in third place has over 75,000 members and \$5.00 dues. The decision to set and maintain such high dues in Illinois was made by the leaders of the organization in 1919. Thus, county and state organizations can operate with adequate finances—the state organization being especially fortunate in its leadership, relationships to

⁶ Annual Report, *op. cit.*, pages 12-14.

educational institutions, and financial ventures and enterprises.⁷ The following comparisons of some forms of state organizations will show the most significant differences:

a. *The Missouri Farm Bureau.* Missouri may be taken as a typical modal-membership state. It had about 27,000 members in 1946. In 1938, 46 county farm bureaus reported a paid up membership of 9,439, most of these being located along the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers with a few in the extreme western counties of the state. Dues are \$5.00, of which \$1.50 is sent to the state organization and 50 cents to the national. Delegates voted to increase the dues to \$10.00 in 1947; one county, St. Charles, voted \$15 dues.

The work of the state organization is handled through six departments: legislation and taxation; insurance and auditing; supply and purchasing; cooperative marketing; and information. Through these departments the state organization has been able "to secure a reduction in the property tax, amendments to the sales tax law exempting sale of feed for farms, amendments to bus and truck laws to permit farmers to transport livestock to market without being subject to public service regulation, the rural electrification development and the amendment of legislation legalizing cooperative economic enterprise. . . . (It has also) undertaken to establish a group hospitalization project.

"County Farm Bureaus have been active in organizing and administering the County Extension programs of the Missouri College of Agriculture and in securing local funds necessary for financing such work. (They have also aided) in organizing and administering Soil Conservation and Agricultural Adjustment programs in the various counties. Farm bureaus have also sponsored community meetings to discuss important farm problems, and have provided the means of disseminating information, not only to their members but to farm people in general. In addition, leaders have been trained for 4-H club work, and, in many counties, local recreational programs, community fairs, and product shows have been sponsored. Some of the more technical of the county farm

⁷ "Serving More Than 100,000 Farm Families," *op. cit.*, page 16.

bureau programs have included the organization of areas against insect infestation and for the eradication of various weeds." ⁸

Apparently the Missouri organization in its county units is primarily an education organization, making the Extension Service available in the counties in which it functions, the state exercising pressure for legislative enactments favorable to farmers.

b. *The Ohio Farm Bureau.* A contrasting situation is presented in Ohio. Previous to 1920, the growth of county farm bureaus in the state accompanied the establishment of agricultural agents. By the end of 1920, extension work was under way in 78 of the 88 counties; the work of the county organizations was largely educational although attempts were made in some counties to establish buying and selling cooperatives; and dues varied from 50 cents to \$1.00.

With the organization of a state federation, cooperative marketing and selling was especially stressed; by 1930 the programs in most counties were made up largely of business activities—extension agents no longer had their offices at county farm bureau headquarters. After 1920, the annual membership dues then were \$15.00. Most of the stress since that time has been on the organization of buying and selling cooperatives, favorable legislation, and investment services. Their reason for change was that "the Agricultural College Extension Service of the Ohio State University and the Grange are amply filling such fields (as production and community projects)." ⁹

Hence many farmers, especially past members and non-members, looked upon the organization in the state as little more than a commercial organization; members were drawn from among the better class of farmers; the cooperative activities launched caused some bitter enemies because they came into competition with locally-owned farmers' cooperative associations of one kind or another; women did not have an important place in the organi-

⁸ C. E. Lively and R. B. Almack, "Some Rural Social Agencies in Missouri," Research Bulletin 307, University of Missouri, Agricultural Experiment Station, 1939, page 42.

⁹ T. B. Manny, and R. C. Smith. "What Ohio Farmers Think of the Farm Bureau."

zation; and members, as a rule, had not accepted a great deal of responsibility for helping the organization—some of them doubtless looked upon it as another commercial service agency.¹⁰

The Ohio Farm Bureau had 18,000 members in 1940; its 1946 membership was over 50,000. One of the most significant changes in the form of organization has been the formation and stimulation of so-called Advisory Councils, which are, in reality, neighborhood and community organizations of members and their neighbors. The process of organization is simple: the start is made by giving a few leading member families, selected from over the county, special training in holding meetings in their neighborhoods to discuss issues with which the organization or the farmers of the state are faced. These leader-families in turn select a few families with which they are most intimate to meet and act as a local "advisory council" to the organization, discussing state and local issues and transmitting the consensus of their opinions to the state office as a guide to them in making decisions on policies. The groups are kept small and new ones are organized as local leaders become willing to carry forward on their own.

By 1946 more than 400 Councils had been organized in the state. A digest of Advisory Council minutes, sent in to the state office by these groups, reveals the types of discussions carried on. In May 1946, for example, the majority of the councils favored the Hill-Bankhead and Flannagan bills before Congress and reported that they were writing their congressmen to this effect. Reactions were thus secured on the price and production of fertilizer, the need for better mail and telephone service, interest in school consolidation, the good being done by and the need for UNNRA, and similar issues.¹¹ There can be little doubt but that these councils have had much to do with the increase in membership in the state. A similar form of organization on the community basis has been undertaken by the Michigan organization.¹²

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pages 40-43.

¹¹ "Digest of Advisory Council Minutes." Columbus: The Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, Education Department, May 1946. See Also "The Advisory Council Guide." A monthly publication by the Ohio Farm Bureau.

¹² "Discussion Guide." East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan Farm Bureau, 1945.

c. *Farm Bureau organization in Illinois.* The state organization encourages the setting up of valuable cooperative and commercial services in Illinois but also urges the maintaining of a virile, general service county organization which stresses educational programs and maintains a very close relationship with the Extension Service.

Cooperatives, when set up, are organized as affiliates of the county farm bureaus and are rarely allowed to carry the specific name "Farm Bureau." Memoranda of understanding are signed by county farm bureaus with the Extension Service of the College of Agriculture, permitting the county organization, with the approval of the Extension Service, to hire and fire the county agent or farm adviser, as he is called in Illinois. In addition, a uniform cooperative agreement, setting forth the relationship between the state association and the county farm bureaus with respect to legislation, organization, and publicity, has existed since April, 1934.¹³

Representatives of the Extension Service, soon after its organization in Illinois under the Smith-Lever Act in 1914, gave a great deal of help in forming responsible organizations in each county prior to and during the employment of farm advisers. Four counties were organized in 1914; by 1919, when the Illinois Agricultural Association was reorganized on an individual membership basis with \$5.00 dues per member, 55 counties had farm bureaus. During this time, the Extension Service, spurred on by war food needs, placed seven organization assistants in the field under the direction of W. F. Handschin, State Leader of Farm Advisers. After 1919, the Illinois Agricultural Association with adequate finances could and did put their own organizers into the field.

In 1920, 48 solicitors were hired on a per diem basis by the state organization, and membership climbed to approximately 106,000. Members were signed on three-year contracts, and some doubtless were oversold, causing a serious slump in membership in 1922. Then a new plan was developed with fewer paid solicitors

¹³ "The Illinois Agricultural Association Record," 25th Anniversary Edition. Vol. 19, No. 1, January, 1940, page 10.

and a large number of volunteer workers who were given intensive training and urged to go out and "sell" memberships in a one- or two-day campaign. Since that time, this plan has been retained, although membership acquisition work is now under the direction of a county organization director in each county.¹⁴

Membership sales have been made easier by the constant development of organization services—some educational, some protective, and others commercial or cooperative. The policy has been to develop these services as farmers have asked for them—first in one or two counties and then in others as the demand arose. In 1919, departments of organization, publicity, and claims were created in the state organization. From 1920 to 1946, the following departments were created with paid directors and staff: legal, research and taxation, fruit and vegetable marketing, transportation, produce marketing, safety, young people's activities, soil improvement, grain marketing, livestock marketing, insurance service, legislation, milk marketing, publicity, rural school relations and sales service.

Concurrently, cooperative and commercial services were organized on a state-wide basis, tying together county and district. They went under the following names: Country Life Insurance Company; Farmers' Mutual Reinsurance Company; Illinois Agricultural Auditing Association; Illinois Agricultural Mutual Insurance Company; Illinois Agricultural Service Company; Illinois Cooperative Locker Service; Illinois Farm Bureau Serum Association; Illinois Farm Supply Company; Illinois Fruit Growers' Exchange; Illinois Grain Corporation; Illinois Livestock Marketing Association; Prairie Farms Creameries; Illinois Milk Producers' Association; and the Illinois Wool Marketing Association.

Memberships in most of the local cooperatives associated with the state associations are on the voting-stock basis, 51 per cent of the stock being held by the Board of Directors of the State Association. Each cooperative's Board of Directors interlocks with the boards of the general organization—that is, the county or state organization, as the case may be. Weaker local units can be

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, page 23.

bolstered by the state association; patronage refunds are paid by most farm bureau-sponsored cooperatives only to members of the parent or sponsoring organization, thus making possible a sales agreement for membership in the farm bureau. For example, farm bureau members are paid patronage refunds on oil products purchased through the cooperative supply companies; these refunds have run as high as 25 per cent, although the usual amount is from 10 to 20 per cent of the value of the yearly sales.

"If Farm Bureau members in Illinois took advantage of all their buying activities," stated Edward O'Neill, the National president, "their patronage dividends would amount to three times the cost of their membership, or \$45.00, yet full-time organization men must be employed to keep up membership. Illinois spends more than any other state to keep up its membership in the Farm Bureau; 70,000 farmers in the state pay over \$1,000,000 a year to belong."¹⁵

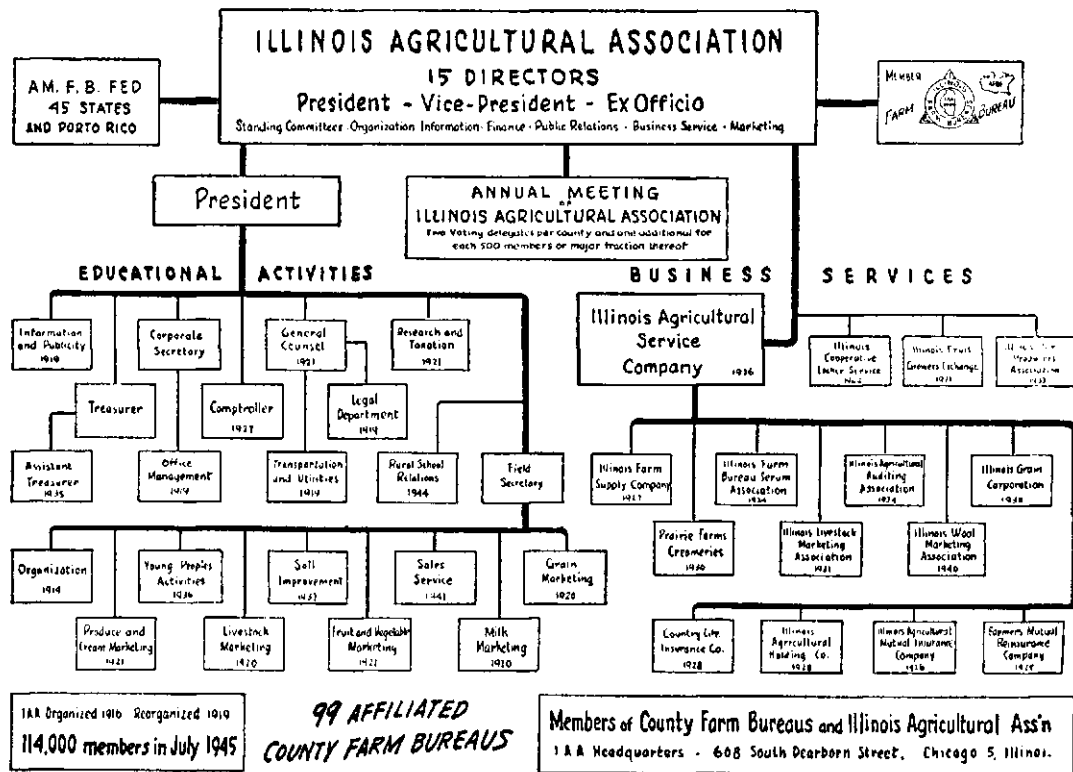
Moreover, the services—cooperative, commercial, and educational—are frequently housed under one roof in the county. The county farm bureau office is also frequently the office of the farm adviser, the home adviser (home demonstration agent), the county AAA committee, the Federal Farm Loan Association, Production Credit, and, in some instances, other federal action agencies. Officials of the Illinois Agricultural Association and the University of Illinois Agricultural Extension Service get together for discussion in an attempt to keep each other informed and to promote a greater coordination of programs conducted for their members and prospective members.

Nature of Community Organizations

The basic administrative unit of the farm bureau is the county unit. In some states, it is also the basic organization unit, membership being direct in the county organization and representation on a county board being elected at random from the membership at the annual meeting. Other county units have township directors elected annually at township membership meetings, the service of

¹⁵ "1940 Yearbook of Agriculture," page 965.

ORGANIZATION CHART . . . *Illinois Agricultural Association*



the organization being carried out by individual contacts, farm visits, called county and community meetings, and county and state publicity organs.

The community organization has been of primary concern in several states. Major efforts have been made in these states to organize and maintain effective local clubs and to see that every new member is included in the membership of some local group. Irrespective of whether there is such a system or the matter of local group contacts is left largely to chance, community organization plays a vital part in the function of the farm bureau.

1. THE UNORGANIZED APPROACH TO THE COMMUNITY. Some form of contact is essential in the community if the farm bureau organization is to be most effective. The individual approach usually results in the feeling on the part of the member that the organization exists for service to him, giving little opportunity for developing a real concern on his part for the welfare of the organization. Some form of local representation on county or larger policy making bodies is essential if any feeling of such concern is to be developed. In Illinois primary dependence has been put upon the county farm bureau board for policy making and program building within the county. Early in the 'twenties, soon after the new state association was formed, an effort was made to organize a farm bureau unit in every township or community. The effort was abortive because of the lack of trained leadership, the lack of a well-defined and developed program, and the almost complete lack of knowledge as to how such units can function effectively. Since that time, many counties have relied upon individual contacts by the farm adviser and other paid and volunteer leaders of the county organization to carry out the program. Emphasis has been given, rather, to the development of services in three fields: educational, legislative and commercial.¹⁸

Publicity, community meetings, and county subject-matter or specialized meetings have been depended upon, thus leaving any

¹⁸ "Serving More Than 100,000 Farm Families," *op. cit.*, page 17.

form of organized group in the community relatively undeveloped. This practice has resulted in a highly centralized county organization with little more than individualized support in the communities, heavy reliance having been put upon the sales value of services, particularly commercial.

2. THE ORGANIZED COMMUNITY UNIT APPROACH. In some counties in Illinois, however, organized community or township units have developed; where these units are carried on by community leaders trained for the task, they have been invaluable. By making them an integral part of the county organization—each unit director a director of the county organization—one county has been able to carry on an aggressive social as well as economic and educational program.

Some county organizations in the various states have direct representation from functioning township or community units or centers. In California a great deal of the educational and service work is carried on through organized farm centers or community units. They have become a distinctive stabilizing influence, providing a rich social, entertainment, and recreational program for the farm people of the community.

The township farm bureau has become the functioning unit of many Iowa county organizations. Each year each township farm bureau plans its year of work, often with the help of the Extension Specialist in Rural Sociology of the College of Agriculture. This plan is carried out primarily through local participation of committees of men, women, and youth. There are similar systems of organizations in other states. References have already been made to the system of organization in Ohio with its 400-odd advisory councils. Michigan has approximately as many community discussion groups. Indiana has always carried on its work through township or community farm bureau units. Considerable emphasis is placed upon community unit organization in Arkansas, Mississippi, and a number of other states. To be most effective such organizations need the attention of county and state professional personnel.

Program and Policies of the Organization

As with the Grange, the Farm Bureau National program is made up of the needs and desires of farmers as expressed by the local county, and state leadership.

1. METHODS OF POLICY MAKING. Resolutions are submitted by delegates to the annual meetings, and these are reviewed by a committee appointed for that purpose. Other techniques employed to get legislative action are (a) securing farmer petitions in favor of a measure and (b) calling mass meetings on a state-wide level to urge the passage of desired legislation.

An illustration of the petition technique was the presentation by Sam Thompson, President of the American Farm Bureau Federation in 1924, of petitions signed by 58,000 Illinois farmers and placed in the hands of Senator McNary and Representative Haugen in support of the McNary-Haugen Equalization Fee Bill. The mass-meeting technique was employed when Illinois farmers were called together in Peoria in 1933 to demand loans at on-the-farm prices on farm-stored corn.¹⁷

However, the usual method—drafting resolutions—seems to have served best to rally the membership around a program and to inform the public, including public officials, of the organization's stand. By keeping legislative representatives and, in some cases, by maintaining a strong lobby, at state and national sessions, the programs demanding legislative approval have been kept constantly before the elected representatives of the people.

2. ORGANIZATION FOR AND CONTENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMS. The national office works through departments: membership and organization, information, research, insurance, for various commodities, and for women's work. There is also a Washington office which reviews and takes action on legislative matters of concern to the members. A summary of the resolutions for 1947 shows the comprehensive nature of the national program and the somewhat conservative stand on many issues:

¹⁷ Illinois Agricultural Association Record, *op. cit.*, pages 24-25.

a. International cooperation. Maintain a strong democracy at home. Help the people of various nations help themselves. Provide a bi-partisan commission to handle foreign relief. Support the United Nations and an international police force. Keep control of atomic and other vital secrets until a responsible independent international agency is set up. Provide for worldwide reduction in armaments and a legal foundation for the peaceful settlement of international disputes. Arrange for gradual adjustments in barriers to world trade, eliminate cartels and other monopolistic devices. Support the principles of trade agreements. Develop a long-time intelligent import program.

b. Farm program. Believe in an economy of abundance. Continue and expand the national agricultural conservation program. Maintain variable price supports varying from 60 to 90 percent of parity. Make the Commodity Credit Corporation a permanent agency. Provide government crop insurance with rates on a sound actuarial basis with regional adjustments. To maintain full employment in industry, and agriculture will maintain high production.

c. Parity. Modernize the parity formula, changes on relative prices to be made by the Secretary of Agriculture after hearings are held.

d. Prices. Control of money, credit and fiscal policies should be placed under an independent appointed authority. Allow the Federal Reserve System to regain control of credit. Refinance the national debt to provide maximum economic and price stability. Reduce lower-bracket income tax rates during periods of depression. Resort to essential public works programs only in business recessions. Stabilize basic commodity prices on a world basis. Prevent reimposition of price control and rationing.

e. Farmer cooperatives. Protect cooperatives as non-profit farmer-owned and used services, taxing individuals receiving them on cooperative savings.

f. Land use. Provide adequate research and information on land, forest and water uses. Classify land by states as to its best uses through local, state, and possibly regional committees. Develop new irrigation projects to emphasize high production per farm family, actively supporting elimination of 160-acre limitation on Federal reclamation projects consisting largely or wholly of privately-owned farm lands in established irrigation areas being actively farmed or having existing water rights. Consider leaving the determination of the need for and practicability of flood control projects to be made by a civil agency.

g. Coordination of agricultural agencies. Place funds for soil conservation purposes on a grant-in-aid basis to be used by agricultural experiment stations for research, by agricultural Extension Services for educational purposes, and by state and county committees of the Production and Marketing Administration for payments for approved practices, with responsibility of regulating features placed in the hands of state, county, and local farmer committees.

h. Soil fertility. Acquire adequate natural resources through TVA, and other means, and expand to a limited extent test-demonstration programs.

i. Labor-management relations. Support legitimate rights of organized labor; recognize paramount rights of the general public; support and improve recently enacted labor laws; support labor in exterminating subversive elements. Give administration of farm labor programs to Extension Service

if the present employment services cannot or do not properly administer the program to the satisfaction of agricultural producers.

j. Farm credit. Speed up ownership of cooperative credit by farmers and banks for cooperatives by cooperatives. Continue commission loans but insure banks against loss. Remove limitation of credit available from land banks. Prevent impairment of furnishing credit by depleting financial resources, using caution in expanding credit in inflationary periods.

k. Rural electrification. Support the program to extend coverage to the 40 percent of farmers not now covered, and modify and design the service so as to be owned, operated and controlled cooperatively by the people served. Use flood control, irrigation and waterway projects insofar as possible for generation of power.

l. Transportation. Support the St. Lawrence Waterway Project on a self-liquidating basis. Oppose high freight rail rates but retain private ownership. Eliminate featherbedding practices. Hold public hearings on all requests for increased rates. Prevent inter-state trade barriers. Establish a separate farm-to-market roads bureau.

m. Research. Support adequately State Experiment Stations. Secure close cooperation between the USDA, State colleges, private industry, and farm organizations on research programs.

n. Rural health. Implement hospital act to adequately serve rural areas. Secure scholarships for prospective practitioners in rural areas. Support voluntary cooperative health associations, opposing legislation for compulsory service. Extend public health protection units and immunization. Extend federal and state grants only on basis of need.

o. Social security. Support present Old Age and Survivors insurance plans, extending them to employees of farm organizations and to farm labor when workable plans are formulated.¹⁹

Matters dealing with home conveniences, housing, church, health, rural schools, libraries, safety, nutrition and rural youth, however, were left to the women's group—The Associated Women of the American Farm Bureau Federation. Without question more could be accomplished if there were greater mutual sharing among the men's and women's groups in the consideration of both economic and social issues.²⁰

3. ACCOMPLISHMENTS. There is a tendency for all farm organizations to claim the benefits of remedial or beneficial legislation, and to place the greatest emphasis upon these accomplishments. It is to be noted that the passage of some of the more important legislative acts have had the support of all farmers' organizations.

¹⁹ American Farm Bureau Federation Official News Letter, Dec, 24, 1947.

²⁰ See The Nation's Agriculture for January, 1948.

Without such cooperation it is doubtful if some of the measures could have been enacted. Nevertheless, each of the organizations can justly take credit for helping with many of the good things that have been brought about for American agriculture, and exclusive credit for some of them. There is an advantage to the cause of organized agriculture when each of the organized groups can take some credit for the economic and social changes that have come about as result of their efforts.

The American Farm Bureau Federation has often been in the forefront in efforts to secure measures for the improvement of agriculture, especially in recent years. This may have been due in part to the advantage of close relations with the leaders in the Extension Service, for both have operated in some states through the same county administrative and professional personnel. The claims made as accomplishments by the national organization was published in 1939 in a pamphlet entitled, "Twenty Years with the American Farm Bureau Federation." Included in these accomplishments is the following:

- (1) Reduction in railroad valuations used in determining freight rates (1920) ;
- (2) Appointment of a farmer representative on the Interstate Commerce Commission (1921) ;
- (3) Passage of the Packers and Stockyards Control Bill and the bill regulating grain exchanges and trading in futures (1921) ;
- (4) Extension of the powers of the War Finance Corporation to lend \$1,000,000,000 to farmers and an appropriation of \$2,000,000 for emergency seed loans to drouth-stricken farmers (1921) ;
- (5) Inclusion of higher rates of duty on various farm commodities in the Emergency Tariff Act (1921) ;
- (6) First agricultural bloc in Congress (1921) ;
- (7) Passage of the Capper-Volstead Act (1921) ;
- (8) Passage of an act to place a farmer representative on the Federal Reserve Board (1922) ;
- (9) Passage of the Fordney-McCumber Tariff Bill (1922) ;

- (10) Passage of the Rural Credits Act and the Federal Warehouse Act (1923);
- (11) Establishment of the Bureau of Dairy Industry in the U. S. Department of Agriculture (1924);
- (12) Passage of the Purnell Act (1925);
- (13) Organization of the Institute of Cooperation (1925);
- (14) Passage of the Gooding-Kitchan Seed Certification Bill (1926);
- (15) Establishment of the Division of Cooperative Marketing in the U. S. Department of Agriculture;
- (16) Passage of a bill permitting the membership of cooperatives on the Board of Trade (1927);
- (17) Passage of an act to add 1½ million dollars to extension work (1928);
- (18) Strengthening the Agricultural Marketing Act, which created the Federal Farm Board (1929);
- (19) Inclusion of farm commodities in tariff duties (1930);
- (20) Ten million dollars appropriation for the promotion of local agricultural credit corporations (1932);
- (21) Passage of an act extending the credit facilities of Intermediate Credit Banks (1932);
- (22) Passage of the first AAA, including the Thomas amendment authorizing the President to reduce the gold content of the dollar;
- (23) Passage of the Mortgage Act to loan nearly \$3,000,000,000 to farmers (1933);
- (24) Passage of the Bankhead-Jones Act for additional Experiment Station work and Extension Service and for the establishment of federal research laboratories (1935);
- (25) Legislation for purchasing surplus farm commodities for relief purposes (1935);
- (26) Passage of an amendment to the Credit Act to reduce interest rates on federal farm loans to 3½ per cent (1935);
- (27) Passage of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act (1936);

- (28) Passage of an act to regulate commodity exchanges (1936) ;
- (29) Passage of the Marketing Agreements Act (1937) ;
- (30) Passage of the second AAA (1938) ;
- (31) Passage of a U. S. Department of Agriculture supply bill for \$500,000,000 for soil conservation and parity payments, surplus disposal, administration of the Sugar Act, crop insurance, road construction, Farm Credit Administration, and other activities of the Department (1939) ;
- (32) Passage of a bill for truthful labeling of fruit and vegetable seeds (1939) ;
- (33) Amendments to the AAA to place corn, wheat, and cotton, with relation to marketing quotas and referendums, on marketing quotas.

Since 1939 and during World War II the organization gave its support to measures encouraging food production through adjustments in price ceiling and price supports and to have them continued into the postwar period (1941) ; the reduction of funds to the Farm Security Administration because of the "findings" of the group that the agency was "wasteful of funds, socialistic in trend, and badly in need of new administrative talent" ²¹ (1943) ; successful opposition to the unionization of agricultural labor (1943) ; these being only a few of the measures taken. Support was given in the postwar period to agricultural appropriations (to prevent serious cuts), to require the War Labor Board to observe the definition of agricultural labor as contained in the Social Security Act, to support grants-in-aid for hospital planning and construction, school lunches, anti-racketeering, and to the use of agricultural commodities in fulfilling UNNRA needs, these being only a few of the measures supported during 1945 and 1946.²²

"Since its inception, the American Farm Bureau Federation has labored incessantly to further such projects as farm-to-market

²¹ Annual Report of the American Farm Bureau Federation, 1943, pages 6 and 7.

²² Annual Report of the American Farm Bureau Federation, 1945 and 1946.

roads; adequate rural credit facilities; freedom of competition among transportation companies; solution of problems of irrigation; adequate appropriation for the Forest Service; improvement of educational and rural health facilities; development of rural youth programs; provision for the work of the Tennessee Valley Authority; principle of retirement of submarginal lands; and the principle of an income for agriculture based on parity." ²³

Summary

The American Farm Bureau Federation is the youngest of the great farm organizations. It grew up with the Extension Service and, in many states, is its direct cooperating agency. State, county, and local organizations have developed on a variety of organizational patterns, each state developing those types of organization which seem best suited to its local conditions.

The farmers who become members are usually the most advanced economically, especially in the states with large memberships. Hence, the organization has always had a strong economic program and has tended to neglect the social and community phases of farm life. As the organization is geared to economic needs, it is sensitive to economic changes. The membership varies with economic conditions more than does that of the Grange, especially in those states where local or community organizations have not been developed.

The Farm Bureau is the middle-ground farmers' organization of the United States; it is especially strong in the grain and livestock states of the Midwest and the upper Mississippi Valley. Its policies are tempered by the thinking of leaders from this section; the proposals coming out of this region are sometimes in conflict with those from the East (New York State), the West (California), and the South (Alabama). Nevertheless, the organization has presented a united front to a surprising degree, each section apparently being willing to give enough ground on conflicting issues to prevent a break in the organization.

²³ Twenty Years with the AFBF, *op. cit.*

The Farm Bureau has been active in encouraging cooperation between farm organizations, often taking the leadership in calling farm organization leaders together. Its policy has been to avoid conflicts with other farm organizations whenever possible, preferring to advertise and advance its own program rather than to disparage that of other groups. The group has not been militant in stirring up direct action movements; it prefers to work through organized and established channels to secure reforms. Because the American Farm Bureau Federation leadership has criticized the Farm Security Administration and seemingly has supported measures approved by the larger farm owner as contrasted with the small operator, the charge has been made that the organization is representative of and speaks for the large commercial farmer.²⁴ In answer to the charge, Chester C. Davis, president, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, made a spot check of farm bureaus in Illinois and came to the conclusion that there is "not much support for the contention that the Farm Bureau is not concerned with the interests of the tenant and the small farmer."²⁵

The organization has given effective support especially to the work of the Experiment Stations and Extension Services, as well as to similar forms of educational service for farmers all through its history. Concerted efforts have been made recently to secure greater coordination of industry, labor, and agriculture. The Farm Bureau is, nevertheless, a farmers' organization, made up of and led by farmers—a strong voluntary organization representing about 1,275,000 of the best among 6,500,000 farmers in the United States.

READINGS

- LIVELY, C. E., AND ALMACK, R. B., "Some Rural Social Agencies in Missouri," Research Bulletin 307, University of Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station, 1939, page 42.
- MANNY, T. B., AND SMITH, R. C., "What Ohio Farmers Think of the Farm Bureau," Ohio Agr. Exp. Bull., Mimeo., pages 7 and 40-43.
- RUSSELL, RALPH, "Membership of the American Farm Bureau Federation, 1926-1935," *Rural Sociology*, Vol. 2, No. 1, March, 1937, pages 29 and 33.

²⁴ Smith, *op. cit.*, page 83.

²⁵ "Serving More Than 100,000 Farmers," *op. cit.*, page 17.

- "Annual Reports" for 1943 to 1947, American Farm Bureau Federation, Chicago.
- "The Illinois Agricultural Association Record," 25th Anniversary Edition, Vol. 19, No. 1, January, 1941, pages 10, 23, and 24-26.
- "1940 Yearbook of Agriculture." Washington, D. C.: Gov't Printing Office, pages 965, and 967-970.
- "Serving More Than 100,000 Farm Families." Chicago: Illinois Agricultural Association, 1945.
- "Twenty Years with the American Farm Bureau Federation." Chicago: American Farm Bureau Federation, 1939.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Compare the membership of the Farm Bureau and of the Grange; where is each strongest, where weakest?
2. What kinds of organizations make up the membership of the American Farm Bureau Federation? Which ones have a voice in the national organization?
3. What elements characterize the Missouri Farm Bureau? In what particulars is the Ohio Farm Bureau unlike that in Missouri? Why is the Illinois organization termed a "middle ground" type?
4. What is the Illinois method of membership acquisition and maintenance? How do you account for its having the largest membership of any state organization of its kind?
5. What methods are used in the Farm Bureau to establish group contracts with members? Which method do you consider most effective? Why?
6. How is the program of the organization developed? How do these methods compare with those used by the Grange?
7. What phases of the 1946 program were of direct concern to the average farmer?
8. What accomplishments recorded by the organization are similar to those claimed by the Grange? Which were clearly accomplished by the Farm Bureau alone?
9. What projects carried on by the organization are of value to the average farmer? Which benefits can be secure without becoming a member?
10. What types of cooperation have various Farm Bureaus developed with the Extension Service?

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Compare the systems of organization in the various states, such as California, New York, Iowa, Illinois and Ohio. Why would it be difficult to standardize these organizational systems as is true of the Grange? Kile, Wiest, and Annual Reports from states and the national organization.

2. Make a study of Farm Bureau-Extension Service relationships. In what ways, if any, do they prevent full cooperation by the Extension Service with other organizations? Kile and other references.
3. Review the annual resolutions of the American Farm Bureau Federation to determine (1) the issues remaining before the organization year after year and (2) the new issues which have been brought before the organization. Annual reports of the AFBF in the January issue of the National News Organ of the organization.

EXERCISE

Examine your own community to determine (1) past or present Farm Bureau activities affecting the farmers and (2) the influence of the Farm Bureau sponsored policies on farm and rural life in the community.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FARMERS' UNION MOVEMENT IN THE U. S. A.

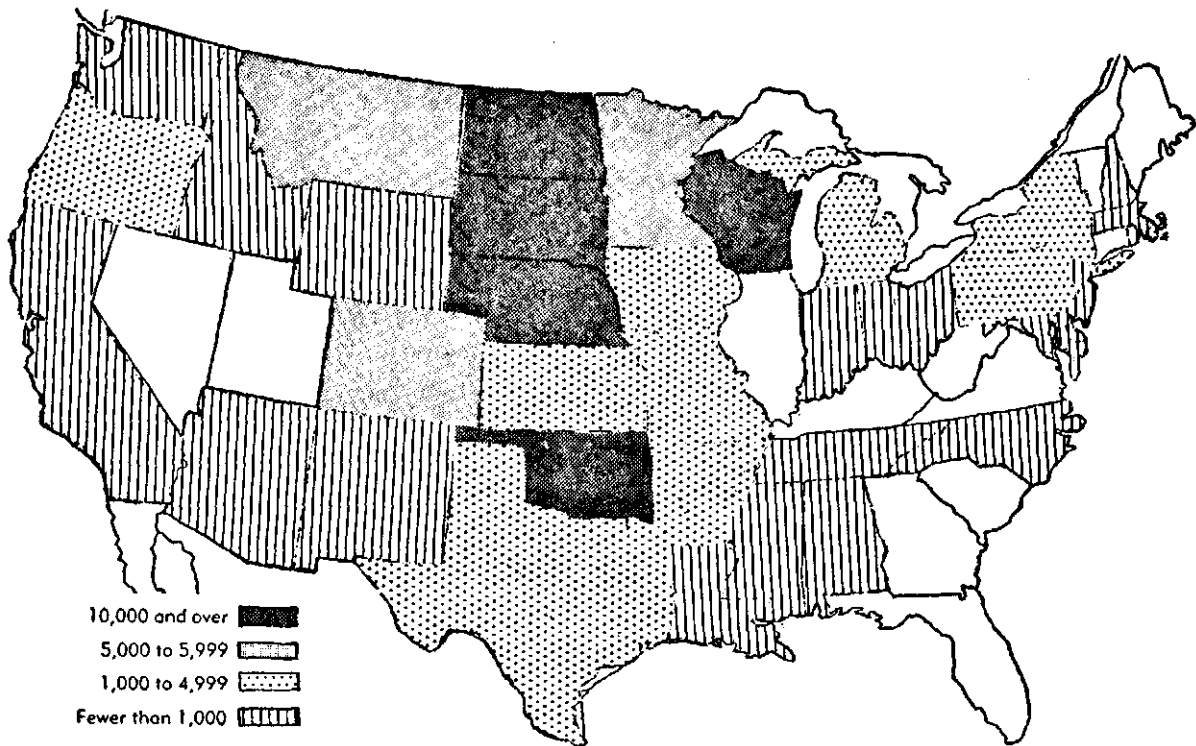
Farmers' Union movements always have been more sympathetic with labor unionism than have other farmer movements. We have noted in a previous chapter the nature of the association of the Knights of Labor and Alliance activities. The idea of unionism seemed gradually to transfer itself to certain farmer groups. Of chief concern here is the study of this movement, especially as it has found expression in the Farmers' Educational and Cooperative Union, generally considered one of the three great farmers' organizations in the United States. Some attention is given in this chapter, also, to the much less well known tenant farmers' union movement.

The Farmers Educational and Cooperative Union

Probably the most vocal of the farmers' organizations in the United States is the Farmers' Union. Its membership is spread through from 35 to 40 states and, counting members of Farmers Union cooperatives, numbers about 350,000. The whole family becomes a part of the Farmers Union when the head of the family joins and pays his dues.¹

1. MEMBERSHIP IN THE ORGANIZATION. The Farmers' Union is a Plains states organization. Organized states in 1946 included Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin, with the bulk of the membership in the states from North Dakota to Oklahoma. The Union reported members in other states, as well, including Arizona, Idaho, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Wyoming, and the

¹ W. P. Tucker, "The Farmers' Union." St. Paul: University of Minnesota, Ph.D. Thesis, 1945.



FARMERS' UNION MEMBERS — 1946

Source National Office, Farmers' Union, Denver

District of Columbia. A strong junior program also has been developed with junior leaders in training in several states.²

Membership figures reported by Mertz³ placed the total membership in 1946 at about 140,000, with membership in Farmers' Union sponsored cooperatives of all kinds at about 350,000. States having more than 10 per cent of the farm families in membership in 1944 included North Dakota (35%), Montana (18%), South Dakota (16%), Oklahoma (14%), and Nebraska (12%). Other states having five per cent or more of all farm families in membership included Oregon, Wisconsin, and Colorado.⁴

The membership goal for the Farmers' Union, as stated in its program for 1946, is "a million members by 1950, 50,000 active locals, and increasingly powerful and comprehensive national publication, and the large cooperatives necessary to give farmers a measure of freedom from economic exploitation."^{4a}

2. STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT. The Farmers' Union has passed through three periods of organizational change.

a. The first period was from 1903 to 1926. The years up to 1906 were a period of trial and error. The growth of the organization really began in that year when Charles Barrett was elected president; he held his office until 1928. The organization was reported to have had 17,938 locals in 1907; its membership was concentrated largely in the South and Southwest in this period. With the coming of the World War in 1918 the organization began to lose members so that by 1920 the Union membership had declined to its lowest point since 1903. It was a period when the numerous and scattered cooperatives were organized, some of which became established to form the pattern of Farmers' Union cooperative activity to follow.

² Grace Talbott Edwards, "The Farmers Union Triangle." Denver: The National Farmers' Union, 1941, pages 29-30.

³ Special tabulation by Ed Mertz, Administrative Assistant, Dept. of Education, National Farmers Union, 1947.

⁴ Tucker, *op. cit.*, maps following page 53.

^{4a} "Agriculture in the Service of Mankind." Denver: Program of the National Farmers Union, Farmers Educational and Cooperative Union, March 6, 1946.

b. The second period began with the depression period of the 'twenties, when the strength of the organization shifted from the South to the Plains states. There was a shift, also, in emphasis from cooperation and education to pressure for remedial legislation and to the use of direct action. The Farmers' Union, under C. E. Huff, pressed for the passage of the McNary-Haugen bill and the Capper-Volstead Act. Failing to secure the former its strength was put back of the movement for the Federal Farm Board.⁵ In 1930, however, John Simpson, who opposed the Federal Farm Board, became president, and E. E. Kennedy became national secretary. These men epitomised the direct action emphasis in the organization. Dues were lowered to 25 cents per year for the national organization, and efforts were made to secure a large membership. The leaders spent much time in legislative activity in support of such measures as the Frazier-Lemke bill to scale down interest rates on farmers' debts and to refinance their burdensome indebtedness, mortgages especially. In Minnesota, Illinois, the Dakotas, and Wisconsin, moreover, direct action groups, notably the Farm Holiday Association, were formed. The purpose of the Holiday Association "was to strike against the low prices, by holding goods off the market. The movement spread rapidly, sponsored in many cases by the Farmers' Union state organization. . . . In Iowa, Milo Reno, veteran farm leader and president of the state Union, led the Farm Holiday Association."⁶

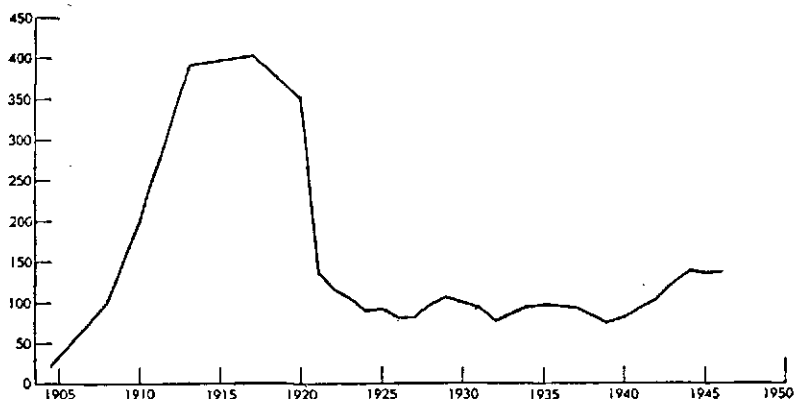
This second period of activity culminated in a split in the organization ranks, due to pressure for participation in the campaign for the election of Congressman Wm. Lemke in 1936 "on a Union Party ticket and with the support of E. E. Kennedy."⁷ In the 1936 convention Kennedy was defeated as secretary by J. M. Graves of Oklahoma on the principle that the most important task of the Union was education and the building of cooperatives rather than for political pressure.

⁵ Personal communication from Robert Handschin, one-time Washington representative, National Farmers Union, 1941.

⁶ Edwards, *op. cit.*, page 41.

⁷ *Ibid.*, page 42.

c. The third period of development of the Farmers' Union came with election of John Vesecky of Kansas, a conservative, who endeavored to develop closer relations with other farmers' organizations and the United States Department of Agriculture than had existed before. In a restatement of principles adopted in 1937 it was stated that the Farmers' Union is an organization "whereby farmers might do as a group what it is impossible for them to do individually—namely, educating farmers to the forces, economic and social, which influence their business and their welfare: build-



(000 omitted)

Trend in Farmers' Union Membership. Figures from 1904 to 1920 from Taylor's "Rural Sociology." Figures from 1921 to 1946 from Minutes of Annual Meetings of the Farmers' Union and from tabulations by Ed Mertz.

ing a cooperative business structure whereby the just share of wealth created by farmers might be retained by them, and giving economic power and vocal expression to American Agriculture" . . . and that . . . "we as an organized group, must unite on a militant program of action—that we must adopt a positive rather than a negative attitude toward the solution of problems confronting our industry."⁸ The third period was advanced by the election of young men to its leadership, notably James Patton of Colorado, the present (1948) president, who hopes to help make his organi-

⁸ *Ibid.*, page 151.

zation a "militant, constructive, and democratic organization of actual farmers."⁹

3. NATURE OF THE ORGANIZATION. The Farmers' Union has endeavored to maintain the same type of organization in every state. In this they have succeeded better than the Farm Bureau but not as well as the Grange.

a. *State organization.* The state of North Dakota has one of the best developed of the state organizations. The Union has been very active in this state and a description of its work will reveal what is being done by the best state organizations. In 1946, the Farmers' Union was the largest educational and social organization of farmers in North Dakota; the local units, numbering over 1,000, organized on township lines, were active in all but one county in the state. "The local meeting . . . is the medium through which the farmer member has the opportunity to discuss his problems with his neighbors, to make a study of matters of mutual interest, and to meet his neighbors in a social way. The expressed program of the Union is three-fold: the promotion of education, cooperation and legislation."¹⁰

b. *Characteristics of membership.* The organization of the Farmers' Union is on a local, county, state and national basis in order to carry out its program. The National Farmers' Union requires that members must be over 16 years of age; locals may include farmers or retired farmers, physicians, ministers, farmers' union employees. Bankers, lawyers, merchants, those belonging to commercial clubs, and members of trusts and combines engaged in speculation in the necessities of life are barred.

Local unions must have no less than 10 male members; 5 or more locals may form a county union; and each local with 10 or more members may have one delegate at the state convention. Youths between the ages of 16 and 21 may belong if they are members of a dues-paying family. Special emphasis is given in some

⁹ *Ibid.*, page 55.

¹⁰ Donald G. Hay. "Social Organizations and Agencies in North Dakota," Bulletin 288, Agricultural Experiment Station, North Dakota Agricultural College, Fargo, July, 1937, page 59.

states to youth organizations for those under 21 years of age—the Junior Union being organically related to the Adult Union. A National Junior Department is maintained with headquarters at Jamestown, North Dakota. It holds camps and institutes for “students and instructors,” puts on national radio programs, conducts mail study courses for members, and develops cooperative projects of its own (the Credit Union, developed by a group of Juniors in a Nebraska Farmers’ Union Local, and the Cooperative Housing Association, developed by the College Local at Fargo, North Dakota, being examples).¹¹

c. *National organization.* The national officers include the president, vice-president, secretary-treasurer and a national executive committee of five. A national legislative office is maintained in Washington with a resident secretary and staff and a national educational department at Jamestown has a director.¹² An annual convention is held at which time the program of the organization is worked out for the ensuing year; this meeting is usually held in November. In recent years, as will be shown, this program has stressed education through the channels of the organization, legislation, relations with labor, cooperation and peace.

4. BASIC ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES. The historic and basic principles of the organization are (1) to attain equity and justice by maintaining a democratic political system and by building a cooperative income system; (2) to cooperate with organized groups who genuinely seek to provide economic security, preserve democratic processes, provide economic abundance for all the people, and preserve democratic principles; (3) to advance a system of cooperative businesses, owned by producers and consumers, as the only means to attain these ends; and (4) to assure agriculture an equal position with other important and essential groups.¹³

¹¹ Gladys Talbott Edwards, “Youth Marches On” Radio Broadcast, January 29, 1939, pub. by the N. D. Farmers’ Union, Jamestown.

¹² “National Legislative Program,” November, 1939, pub. by the National Farmers Union.

¹³ See Edwards, *op. cit.*, pages 151 to 154, for a restatement of the principles.

The 1939 Convention publication of the National Legislative Program carried as purposes the above and "To secure equity, establish justice and apply the Golden Rule; to discourage the credit and mortgage system, to educate the agricultural classes in scientific farming, to garner the tears of the distressed, the blood of the martyrs, the laugh of innocent childhood, the sweat of honest labor, and the virtue of a happy home as the brightest jewels known; to obtain the above . . . to carry business operations, on the cooperative plan, into the distributive as well as the productive field. . . ." ¹⁴ These, be it noted, are strikingly similar to the purposes and objectives of the Texas Alliance as well as the first Union formed in the South.

5. THE PROGRAM OF THE ORGANIZATION. The philosophy of Farmers' Union cooperation is unique among farmers' organizations. As expressed by its president in 1939, "The Farmers' Union is trying to organize farmers into their own group, to educate them in economics, production, and cooperation, and to develop cooperatives, beginning with local cooperatives and going on, through processing and handling, all the way to consumers. Handling one-third of the farm business would be enough to do the job, according to the example set by Sweden. Our joint committee with labor unions is developing consumer cooperatives in cities." ¹⁵

The program of the Union in general calls for a militant advancement in the following fields: (1) refinancing dispossessed farmers; (2) adjusting mortgage debts; (3) restoring the ownership of land to operators; (4) manufacturing farm machinery; and (5) providing crop insurance, cooperative wholesale stores, processing plants, insurance programs (including fire, life and hospitalization), and an aggressive educational program to promote these activities among youth and adults.

6. THE POSITION PREVIOUS TO WORLD WAR II.

a. *The 1939 statement.* At the annual meeting of the Farmers' Union in 1939 the members stated (1) that failure to pay poll taxes

¹⁴ The 1940 Program of the National Farmers' Union.

¹⁵ 1940 USDA Yearbook, *op. cit.*, page 956.

and property taxes should not be the basis for disfranchising any citizen; (2) that legislation should be enacted to assist in the construction and operation of cooperative hospitals; (3) that farmers should be given the advantages of the National Bankruptcy Act; (4) that county AAA committees should be given broader powers to allot acres to producers in the counties; (5) that the cost of production or parity, whichever is greater, should be paid for farm products consumed domestically; (6) that legislation should be enacted to protect the public against wool substitutes; (7) that state unions should sponsor legislation for homestead tax exemption and a graduated land tax; (8) that civil liberties and civil rights of citizens should be protected; (9) that legislation should provide for a debt-adjustment plan, a dairy bill, a cotton certificate plan, a wheat income certificate plan, and a similar plan for other farm commodities; and (10) that loans made by the Commodity Credit Corporation should be at 75 percent of parity.¹⁶

b. *Agreements with other farmers' organizations.* Proposals made by the organization in the prewar period which were in agreement with other farmers' organizations included soil conservation and commodity income programs, expansion of the Farm Credit Administration to meet the needs of farm tenants, debt adjustments, land use, mortgage financing, rehabilitation, and emergency relief. The Farmers' Union favored placing the Farm Credit Administration in the Department of Agriculture and eliminating the line between so called business or economic credit and social credit. The organization also felt that cooperatives should be used wherever available and serviceable for warehousing and distributing farm commodities, including those handled by Federal agencies such as the Commodity Credit Corporation, so as to discourage the government's entrance into the field of distribution.

c. *Unique Positions of the Farmers' Union.* The underlying implication of the socialization of agriculture to the degree seemingly desired by the union did not have the support of either

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, page 958.

the Farm Bureau or the Grange. It has always been a strong supporter of the Farm Security Administration. Also it supported the continuance of the Federal expansion of the Surplus Commodities Corporation, expansion of the food-stamp plan, added support for the Rural Electrification Administration, revision of crop insurance to insure as much as 75 percent of loss (based on quality as well as on quantity), and extension of the program to include other crops.

Other proposals favored included administration of farm programs by bona fide farmers, elected democratically; preservation of the family-sized farm through favorable legislation; legislation to encourage the rapid expansion of cooperatives; taxing of net incomes but not of sales; permanent establishment of low interest rates; and refinancing of farm indebtedness on an amortized basis, using funds provided by the governmental issue of money.

d. *The 1940 resolutions.* Its 1940 program reemphasized many of the above demands and, in addition, sought to abolish the practice of issuing government tax-exempt bonds, favored the conservation of all natural resources, opposed the regulation of transportation rates tending to increase costs, opposed the repeal of the Interstate Commerce Act relative to discrimination between long and short hauls, and "reaffirmed their desire to cooperate with their brethren in the mills, mines, and factories."¹⁷

7. THE POSTWAR POSITION OF THE FARMERS' UNION. In the 1944 conference, "Farmers' Union leaders favored extending the wage-hour Act to include farm wage earners at a maximum of 60 cents an hour, to protect the family-type farmer from the big commercial farmers operating with low paid labor."¹⁸ This 60-cent minimum would also be used to compute the farm family labor charge to go into the price formula for production agreements. The government support price would be stipulated in advance of the planting and breeding season.¹⁹

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, page 959.

¹⁸ Carlisle Hodgkin, "So Here's Your Postwar World." *Successful Farmer*, Jan. 1945, Vol. 43, No. 1, pages 31-32.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, page 32.

Other important postwar Farmers' Union proposals were:

- (1) Extension of the TVA principle to all river valleys in America, beginning with the Missouri Valley;
- (2) A program of private, cooperative, and government action to provide adequate public health service, hospitals, clinics, mobile health units, and physicians in rural areas;
- (3) An immediate "100 percent capital gains tax" on speculative resales of farm land to prevent further price inflation;
- (4) A government cost analysis of every product and service of farm, industry, and the professions, to keep people informed on the true cost of goods and services;
- (5) Federal aid to schools on the basis of need without disturbing the autonomy of existing school administration.

The 1945 Farmers' Union program "relies upon a continued high level of industrial employment . . . to provide jobs necessary to make the market for a continued high level of farm and ranch production. . . . But an over-all, postwar farm program to direct shifts in production and gauge total production of individual products was presumed to be necessary, consciously and deliberately designed to assign progressively larger shares of the needed production to family-type farmers as against, and at the expense of, large, commercial-type units.

"This would be accomplished by voluntary 'production agreements' between individual farmers and the Federal Government. These agreements would be administered by 'democratically elected farmer committees who would have full authority to pass on the justice, equity, and practicality of each agreement (which is to be adapted to the individual farm) and to cooperate with and assist participating farmers."

The 1946 program statement further refines the Farmers' Union position, laying stress on the need for a new general agricultural program, providing for democratically selected local farm committees and similarly selected state and national committees to have power to negotiate annual support prices and locally to negotiate the provisions of a farm plan for each farm. The basic objective

for all national farm plans is to "place all farms ultimately on an economic-size, family-farm basis."²⁰ This would include a national land policy looking to the subdivision of large farms into the family-size units and the combination of units too small for this purpose into economic sized units.

The organization in 1946 also urged every effort to maintain peace, believing that such was the only alternative to "obliteration of the human race" and gave its support to the United Nations Organization. As a part of the plan it supported the Food and Agriculture Organization, stressing the need for the establishment of a World Agricultural Credit Corporation and the organization of an international farmers' organization.

8. ORGANIZATIONAL PROMOTION AND COOPERATION. The Farmers' Union, like the Grange and the Farm Bureau, maintains its legislative office in Washington. Thus, national professional leaders can and do meet frequently on common ground, and conferences with governmental officials are possible. Policies of this organization, like those of the Grange and the Farm Bureau, are heard and frequently heeded by governmental policy workers.

The Farmers' Union has its own "house organ," *The National Farmer*. The state units publish newspapers for state or regional circulation monthly or semi-monthly where the membership justifies so doing.

For a time, the Farmers' Union joined hands in spirit, if not in fact, with the other two great farmers' organizations. The principles of the AAA were agreed upon by the leaders of the three organizations in 1933. In 1939, the principle of protecting the domestic market for the American farmer was agreed upon, and all three favored increasing to parity agriculture's share in the national income. The Grange favored voluntary cooperation rather than "a government strait jacket"; the Farm Bureau asked for farm prices high enough to insure a fair exchange of farm products for the products of industry; the Farmers' Union wanted a "parity income for agriculture sufficient to cover production costs, to pro-

²⁰ "Agriculture in the Service of Mankind," *op. cit.*

vide a home free from threat of dispossession, and a decent standard of living for ourselves and our families."

9. THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE ORGANIZATION. The Farmers' Union is best known for its championing of the low-income farmers in the United States; but its chief accomplishments have been largely in the carrying out of specific projects or of the advancement of the general interests of the farmers making up its membership.

a. *Promotion of cooperatives.* The organization has been particularly effective in advancing cooperation. The Farmers' Union Grain Terminal Association, for example, organized in 1938, has handled 40,000,000 bushels of grain and has helped to increase to 220 the number of Farmers' Union sponsored farmers' cooperative elevators in the Northwest—principally in Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota.²¹

b. *Creation of public interest in agriculture's problems.* A second unquestioned accomplishment of the Union has been the creation of public interest in the problems of the American farmer. The leadership of the Farmers' Union in its militant fashion has probably done more than any other farmers' organization in this respect.

c. *Legislative accomplishments.* Handschin writes of the Union, "Despite bitter experience in politics and legislation, we did succeed, both on the state level and in Washington, particularly during the war and in the 'twenties. Legislation dealing with credit and marketing regulations and treatment during the War owes much to the Union. . . . Since 1933 legislative achievements have been more than generally realized. Our militant leadership in 1931 to 1934 in the Northwest was perhaps the largest factor in securing emergency New Deal legislation. Despite the break in 1933 between John Simpson and the Northwest group, the latter has done much since 1933. The original AAA wheat program was written by the Northwest group. The establishment of FSA was almost entirely due to the Northwest group. The passage of the Commodity

²¹ 1940 USDA Yearbook, *op. cit.*, page 956.

Exchange Act was very definitely the work of Mr. Thatcher, as was Wheat Crop Insurance. The Bankhead-Jones Tenant-Purchase program was largely the outcome of our pressure, Mr. Thatcher serving in the President's Tenancy Commission. We did much for Surplus Commodity activities and are responsible for the current revision of the Land Bank System. Meanwhile we worked with other groups to secure appropriations and to prepare the major farm bills. Several minor legislative gains of great importance to cooperative activities have been achieved, including the continuation of tax exemption in 1936. Just this spring (1941) we have finally secured adequate credit through FSA to assist low income farmers to become members of cooperatives, which is the most important problem in the South."²²

d. *Championship of family farming.* The Farmers' Union leaders have reiterated time and again their belief in the family-farm, and have looked particularly to the Farm Security Administration (now the Farmers' Home Administration) to provide the poorer classes the opportunity to own their own places. They believe that "the giant tractors of industrialized agriculture are menacing the family-sized farm. These tractors carry armor of political power as protection against the advance of the National Labor Relations Act, the Wage Hour Act, and the Social Security Act, and against the use of the Farm Security Administration program on a scale adequate to meet the needs of returning farm-bred veterans and farm wage workers and tenants aspiring to climb to land-ownership. Industrialized, mass production agriculture will fight every effort to break up big farms by purchase or resale to individual or cooperative farm operators. It will likewise fight efforts to provide small farmers with enough land and resources to make a decent living. Industrial farms, operating with unique immunity an expanding sweatshop, using migrant labor at substandard wages and producing at lower unit costs, is our problem."²³

²² Handschin, *op. cit.*

²³ Paul Sefton, "Power Politics in Agriculture." *Social Action*, Vol. 12, No. 4, April 15, 1946.

In their position in support of the FSA, particularly, the Farmers' Union has had the support of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference and other national church groups.

e. *Sympathy with the plight of dispossessed farm laborers.* The organization has taken a very sympathetic position relative to farm labor, particular those of the migrant type. It gained considerable encouragement and support from the LaFollette Civil Liberties Committee study of the activities of the Associated Farmers of California, "a study (which) concluded with the significant warning that the same practices of exploitation, systematic terror and violence employed cooperatively by growers and public officials could be easily duplicated anywhere in America."²⁴

Although the Farmers' Union sometimes has been branded as a "poor farmers' organization" its most effective work has been done in the Plains States where it has secured the loyal support of many of the best farmers of the area. Considered by some a radical organization it is not so considered in its best states. It always has been a militant organization, but its chief strength in any area has been the working out of a concrete program for the masses of the farmers. It has continued the Populist tradition of agrarian reform carried by the Alliance in the last century; it will probably continue to be looked upon as the left-wing or radical farmers' organization in America.

The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union²⁵

Tenant farming in the South has always been precarious, especially that which is popularly called the share-cropper system. The line between the share cropper and the farm laborer may be said to be one of seasonal condition, for in one season the man may be a share-cropper, and in another a laborer, depending upon the advantage to the owner in the system used. Because they move often, seeking a kindlier landlord, a better house, or just change, the tenants and laborers have little group solidarity. It is not surprising, therefore, that townsmen should have been the originators of the organization of the Tenant Farmers' Union.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, page 32.

²⁵ Rockwell C. Smith, "The Church in Our Town." Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1945, pages 85-88.

1. **THE PURPOSE OF THE ORGANIZATION.** These poor farmers in their despair in the depth of the depression turned to socialistic minded service men—a dry cleaner and a filling station operator—who had a reputation for concern about underprivileged persons, for support. No discriminations were made between whites and Negroes. The immediate concern was for those who reputedly had been unfairly deprived of their AAA payments. More recently its program has centered about:

- a. Defending the civil liberties of the members and their right to organize
- b. Securing for tenants full payments due from the production control program
- c. Leading day laborers in strikes for higher wages and for better living and working conditions for tenants and laborers.

2. **MEMBERSHIP IN THE ORGANIZATION.** The organization has had memberships scattered through Texas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. At one time its membership was over 35,000 but in recent years it has declined. It now has become affiliated with the AFL and has changed its name to the National Farm Labor Union, with headquarters in Memphis, Tennessee.

The organization has been a "depression time" organization; dominated as it is by labor unions, it will doubtless lean far in the direction of bringing the trade union technic to bear on the solution of the farm laborer's and tenant's problems, especially as they exist in the South and in other sections in which the industrialization of agriculture is far advanced.

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Compare the organizational strength, state-by-state, of the Farmers Union, with that of the Farm Bureau and the Grange.
2. Discuss the three stages of development of the Farmers Union; what do you think is most constructive in each phase; what most likely contributed to the continuance of the organization?
3. How does the system of organization compare with that of the Grange and the Farm Bureau?
4. What are the four basic principles of the organization? What class of farmers are likely to be most interested in the organization?
5. Compare the 1937 purposes with those of the Alliance (See Part II).
6. Which of the points in the program of the Farmers Union are of direct concern to the average farmer?
7. What parts of the program are directed toward special groups?
8. What have been the chief accomplishments of the Farmers Union?
9. On what issues is the Farmers Union in agreement with the Farm Bureau; the Grange? At what points does there seem to be disagreement?
10. What is the purpose and significance of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union?

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Compare the purposes, philosophy, and system of organization of the Farmers Union with that of the Alliance; the Non-Partisan League; the Equity. Weist, Hibbard and Edwards.
2. Review the history of the organization to determine (1) issues which have confronted the organization from the beginning and (2) new issues which have found a place in its resolutions. Edwards and Proceedings of Annual Meetings.
3. How does the present program of the Farmers Union agree and how disagree with that of the Grange and of the Farm Bureau; trace the trend in the extent of cooperativeness. Proceedings of the Annual Meetings of the three organizations.

EXERCISE

Examine your own community to determine (1) past or present Farmers Union activities or evidences of them and (2) the influence of Farmers Union sponsored policies on farm and rural life in the community.

CHAPTER XIV

ORGANIZATIONS OF RURAL YOUTH

Rural youth organizations are not new in America. Youth were formed into and had their organizations in churches early in the history of the country. Farmers' organizations, such as the Grange, provided a place for youth organizations within the parent organization, the Grange doing so soon after its organization. Public schools have provided for youth organizations for a long time; and vocational organizations for rural youth have become very widespread in the country.

Probably the most extensive organization of rural youth in America is the 4-H Club movement which in 1946 had enrolled more than one million six hundred fifteen thousand youth in the age-group 10 to 20 years.¹ Youth in rural communities also have their fraternal, social and recreational clubs. The boys and girls scout movement has spread into rural areas. Older youth, 16 or 18 to 25 or 30 years of age, for whom much concern has been expressed in the last decade, have begun to form groups, some under the sponsorship of Farmer's Institutes, a large number sponsored by high school vocational agricultural departments, an increasing number with the help of Extension Services in Agriculture and Home Economics, and a considerable number furthered by farmers' organizations—the Grange, the Farm Bureau and the Farmer's Union.

The 4-H Club Movement

When an activity has grown to the proportions of the 4-H Club program, with its support by farm leaders, organizations, and by farm people themselves, it can well be termed a movement. It has certain characteristics which have had much to do with its spread. The three chief characteristics are (1) that it is voluntary, that is, boys and girls of the eligible age join of their own volition (as

¹H. W. Porter, "Extension Accomplishments 1946." Washington: U.S.D.A. Ext. Serv. Cir. 445, Aug. 1947, page 9.

contrasted, for example, with compulsory attendance at school); (2) that its primary objective is educational, providing for achieving this objective through project work; and (3) that it is socializing, that is, provides for the meeting of youth with youth, in girls' clubs, in boys' clubs and in many states in youth clubs including both boys and girls. These clubs are usually run by the boys and girls themselves, as will be shown later, though under the sponsorship of a lay leader.²

1. HOW THE MOVEMENT BEGAN. The 4-H Club movement began with sporadic efforts by adults, some of them rural school teachers, who saw the possibility of teaching improved farm or home practices to children and through them to adults. "The movement has grown from a few corn, canning, and poultry clubs in the south and middlewest, to a nation-wide organization of adolescent youth."³ "Corn clubs were organized in Illinois, Ohio, and in Iowa in 1899, 1902, and 1904, respectively, and other northern states soon adopted a similar plan of junior work, which in many areas was conducted in connection with the Farmers' Institutes. In Texas, Farmers' Conferences organized the Farmer Boys' and Girls' League, which in 1904 had something over 1,200 members."⁴

In 1903 Seamon A. Knapp in his fight on the boll weevil in the cotton states of the South, organized boys into corn clubs in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of crop rotation and diversification as a mean of offsetting the boll weevil's depredations. These were so successful that by 1909 there were over 10,000 boys enrolled throughout the South.⁵

"In 1910, with the aid of the General Educational Board, girls' canning and poultry clubs were started in South Carolina and Virginia, and by 1914 when the Smith-Lever Act was passed, over

²D. E. Lindstrom, "4-H Club Membership," *Youth Leader's Digest*, Vol. 2, No. 9, May, 1940, page 363.

³G. E. Farrell, "Boys' and Girls' 4-H Club Work under the Smith-Lever Act," *USDA Misc. Cir.* 85, Dec. 1926.

⁴A. C. True, "A History of Agricultural Extension Work in the United States," *USDA Misc. Cir.* 15, Oct. 1928.

⁵Farrell, *op. cit.*

33,000 girls were enrolled to learn how to augment and improve the family food supply.”⁶

The Federal Smith-Lever Law enacted in 1914 gave the movement impetus and brought it under sponsorship of the Extension Service system. In the World War period of 1917-1919 a rapid expansion took place under the slogan “Food will Win the War” and over a million rural youths enrolled. After the war enrollment slumped to less than half that number—but since that time there has been a steady growth leading to the present number excluding that of the 1917-1919 period. The movement has spread to England and other countries and thus has become international in character.

2. HOW 4-H CLUBS ARE ORGANIZED.

a. *Sponsorship.* Four-H Club work is a part of the system of Extension in Agriculture and Home Economics provided for by the Smith-Lever Law enacted in 1914. It is carried on by Extension Services of Colleges of Agriculture in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. Through this cooperation each State Extension Service has a staff of state 4-H Club leaders, both for boys and for girls. In some states a state leader for boys’ work, and one for girls’ work, is appointed to head the staff, being responsible to the Director of Extension; in other states, as in Illinois, the state leaders of farm advisers (county agents) and home advisers (home demonstration agents) have charge of club work. The staff of assistant leaders are responsible to the state leaders.⁷

In the county, 4-H Club work is under the direction of the county extension agent. Usually the county agricultural agent has charge of boys’ work unless a special 4-H Club agent is employed; and the county home demonstration agent, if one is employed, carries responsibility for girls’ work; otherwise both boys’ and

⁶ Mary Eva Duthie, “4-H Club Work in the Life of Rural Youth.” Chicago: Mimeo. pub. by the National Committee on Boys and Girls Club Work, 1935.

⁷ W. E. Garnett, “Young People’s Organizations in Relation to Rural Life in Virginia with Special Reference to 4-H Clubs.” VII Bul. 274, V. P. I., Blacksburg, June 1930, page 8, Fig. 1.

girls' work is carried on under the direction of their agricultural agent.⁸ A considerable part of the new (1945) Bankhead-Flannagan funds are being used for 4-H club work and for older youth activities.

b. *Local organization.* As implied by the name, 4-H club work is carried through neighborhood or community groups. Each group must have its local leader and elect a full set of officers. Boys or girls aged 10 to 20 years of age are eligible for membership upon signifying an intention to carry on a project. The project, for example, may be the purchase, feeding and care of a calf. This calf is either shown or sold as part of a beef enterprise on the farm. The project is carried on by the boy or girl under the supervision of the local leader, using practices recommended by the Extension Service of the College of Agriculture. All members are urged to carry through projects to completion, and recognition is given for project completion. Information on the care of the project is made available in club meetings, as well as by personal visits by the local leader, by attendance at demonstrations, and by bulletins, circulars, news stories and other source material. Meetings include, also, opportunities for discussion, games, singing and for carrying on business of the club. The club meetings are conducted by the officers, recognition being given members for participation in the programs of the meetings.⁹

3. ACTIVITIES CARRIED ON BY THE CLUBS. The core of 4-H Club work is the project. The member learns new practices by doing the things himself or herself: Feeding a calf, growing an acre of corn, making a dress, rearranging a room—but the other activities accompanying work on the project have come to mean much to 4-H Club work. The emphasis was first placed on teaching new practices; in the last three decades more and more emphasis has been placed on the personal development of the boy or girl. For a time much emphasis was placed on showing the product at

⁸G. L. Warren, "Organization of 4-H Club Work." Mimeo. pub. No. 320, U. S. D. A., page 7.

⁹E. I. Pilchard, "Officers' Handbook for Local 4-H Clubs," Agr. Ext. Service Cir., 1932, for suggested order of business for Agricultural Clubs.

community, county, state, national, and international shows. This feature, promoted through the giving of prizes and awards for outstanding work, is still an important aspect of 4-H Club work.

Group activities are coming to play an increasingly important part: the local club meeting with opportunities for participation by all members; county rally and achievement days; encouragement both for leaders and members, where a variety of activities with increasing emphasis on social recreation are available; tours, trips and demonstrations, enrich the program and are helping make of 4-H Club work an important movement of youth in a democracy.¹⁰

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WORK. Studies made to determine how effectively 4-H Club work meets its objectives have revealed not only its superiority to many other activities as an educational medium, but also its shortcomings, especially from the standpoint of its effect on the boy or the girl.

A Virginia study shows as strong points that 4-H Club work is one of the most valuable methods yet devised for the training of rural youth. It points out as weaknesses that too few are reached, the per capita costs are too high and insufficient attention is given to other aspects than technical agriculture and the physical aspects of homemaking.¹¹

A Midwest study showed that some youth would join while others could not, that universal contribution is the satisfaction derived from 4-H Club memberships, and that past members, though not necessarily better off financially than non-members in similar situations, did assume more social responsibility and were participating more widely in community organizations. They seemed to feel a greater need for additional social contacts than those who had not joined the organization.¹²

Studies in Illinois examined the selective factors in 4-H Club work and gave attention also to effects on capability and personal

¹⁰ T. A. Erickson, "Guide Posts for Local 4-H Leaders." Pub. by the Dept. of Relations, General Mills Inc., Minneapolis, 1941, for a popularized manual for leaders. See also "4-H Club story" by the same author and publisher, 1947.

¹¹ Garnett, *op. cit.*, pages 78-81.

¹² Duthie, *op. cit.*, pages 93-100.

quality.¹⁸ Several factors were definitely of a selective nature: "(1) . . . 4-H Club work does select those who enjoy better social and economic advantages. This is not surprising in view of the fact that present 4-H Club members and parents are usually the more alert to new ways of doing things. (2) . . . Parents' attitudes are important. Parents who are members of organizations cooperating with the Extension Service and understanding its program and activities, are more successful in getting their young people to become 4-H Club members than others. (Doubtless the social mindedness of the youth was a positive factor.) Those who approve the better social functions in the community, especially church and church activities, are parents who were more successful in getting their children to take part in 4-H Club work. . . . (3) Age is a selective factor. Younger boys and girls join in greater numbers than those in the later teens. . . . (4) Young people who are more ascendant, more willing to take responsibility in groups, not timid in social situations are those more likely to join 4-H Clubs. This was especially true for girls. The same forces that impelled youth to take part in other social activities, it seemed, impelled them to join 4-H Clubs as well. . . . (5) The joiners, that is, those who are already members of various organizations for youth in the community, especially the boys, join in greater numbers than those who were not members of organizations. . . . (6) Good attitudes toward farm life were selective. Boys who like farm life joined in greater numbers; boys and girls who saw possibilities of improvement in farm life joined in greater numbers than others."¹⁴

The study showed that the capability of the boy or girl was definitely improved by 4-H Club work. "Boys and girls alike who were better adapted to farm life, who, having had experience with it, a liking for it, and a better understanding of it, made better achievement scores than others. . . . But . . . girls who did make the better scores and who had been in 4-H Club work several years

¹⁸ D. E. Lindstrom and W. M. Dawson, "Selectivity 4-H Club Work." Bulletin 426; and "Effects of 4-H Club Work on Capability and Personal Quality," Bul. 451, Agr. Exp. Sta., U. of Ill., 1938 and 1939.

¹⁴ Lindstrom, "4-H Club Membership." *Op. cit.*, pages 363, 366, 367.

did not have a particularly strong interest in farm life."¹⁵ The winning of prizes and awards, it was thought, would be another measure of achievement, but it was found that boys who won prizes and awards did not necessarily have higher achievement scores; prizes did encourage boys to stay in 4-H Club work longer, but it did not do much to help the boy master his subject.¹⁶

Measures used by the study to determine effects of 4-H Club work on personal quality did not reveal very significant results. Boys and girls who already had good attitudes toward farm life had their belief strengthened in it; 4-H Club work helped improve attitudes of boys toward the possibilities of farm life.¹⁷

These studies confirm the belief that 4-H Club work has ushered in a new and valuable teaching device; that the organization centers in youth and appreciation of what farming and farm life ought to be, and that it has an important influence, as have other rural youth groups, in moulding the character and shaping the social or group life of the boy or girl. "Nothing can go far wrong with America when we are building a future citizenship like this."¹⁸ It has grown from 116,262 in 1914 to its 1946 high of 1,615,039. It is one of America's finest rural youth organizations.

Rural Youth

A new program or state-sponsored movement developed for youth above 4-H Club age about 1930, when depression conditions brought about a decrease in the number of farm youth moving to the city and a consequent backing up of older youth on the farms.

1. GROWTH OF THE MOVEMENT. Leaders in the Extension Service took note of the increasing numbers of youth over 18 and up to 35 years of age seemingly stranded on farms. Here and there activities had developed among these youth having in them some answer to the problem of providing something constructive for them. It was discovered by several studies, also, that 4-H Club

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, page 368.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, page 369.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, page 370.

¹⁸ John F. Case, "Under the 4-H Flag," J. B. Lippincott, 1927, page 176.

work, though designed for all youth from 10 to 20 years of age, did not hold the youth over 16 in appreciable numbers. As the depression advanced the numbers of youth 18 years and older on the farms grew; hence, a number of studies were made¹⁹ and considerable activity developed, chiefly through the medium of Extension Services, for this age group.

By 1934 serious questions were raised as to whether or not there would be a national youth movement, if rural youth in America were not being neglected. One publication called attention to the fear on the part of the youth due to lack of economic opportunity, but also to the improbability of an American Youth Movement because the spirit and uniformity of purpose were lacking. It called attention, however, to a rural youth movement already under way and named 4-H Clubs, Future Farmers, rural scout, and Y. M. and Y. W. programs in rural areas as evidences. It described in detail the activities of Collegiate Rural Clubs characterizing them as the Collegiate Rural Life Movement.²⁰

It was during this period that rural young adult groups came into being and programs were developed for the groups "above 4-H Club age, out of school, and not yet established in business and homemaking for themselves."²¹ By 1934 the leaders in the 4-H Club movement recognized the problems of the older youth or young adult as different from those of youths in the younger ages. In a national conference it was recommended that if the Extension Service were to provide something for the young adults it should (1) recognize the needs and desires of those youth, (2) provide

¹⁹ See for example W. V. Dennis, "Organization Affecting Farm Youth in Locust Township, Columbia County," Penn. State Coll. of Agr. Bul. 265, June 1931, concluding that "The absence of youth organizations that furnish to rural boys and girls the opportunities offered city boys and girls . . . indicates an inadequate emphasis on the activities of rural youth," pages 38 and 39. See also Esther M. Colvin, "Farm Youth in the United States," Agr. Econ. Bib. No. 65, Supp. No. 17, B. A. E., U. S. D. A., 1936, for a list of studies and writings on Rural Youth.

²⁰ E. L. Kirkpatrick and Agnes M. Boynton, "Is There an American Youth Movement," Cir. 271, Coll. of Agr., Uni. of Ill., 1934, pages 10 and 11.

²¹ This was the means of identification determined upon by the Extension Service in Agriculture and Home Economics at the University of Illinois.

means for discussing problems through the Extension Service, and (3) that activities or programs should be social in nature but that they need not be uniform.²²

2. OBJECTIVES FOR RURAL YOUTH PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES. Numerous activities and programs have since been developed in various states for the older rural youth or rural young adult group. The objective of rural youth organizations and programs from state to state are essentially similar: (1) to bridge the gap between 4-H Club work and adult work, (2) to develop leadership among rural youth, (3) to provide programs and activities of interest to the group, (4) to encourage projects which will help the youth become established in farming as, for example, through a partnership with the father on a farm, and (5) to employ an interest in and an understanding of, the problems of youth in urban areas, and (6) to develop a sense of civic and social responsibility.²³

3. SYSTEMS OF ADMINISTRATION. The various states developed different systems of administration; some carried the work as a part of Extension in Rural Sociology; in some the 4-H Club staff carried the responsibility; in others, specialists in rural youth work were appointed especially to develop the programs. In Illinois a college committee was appointed to study and carry on experimental work with older rural youth groups out of which the present program has grown.²⁴ The groups developed have used various names: Utopia Clubs, 4-H Extension Club, Rural Life Association, Older Young People's Groups, Senior Extension Clubs, Rural Young Adult Groups, and Rural Youth Groups, are typical for various states.²⁵

4. THE GROWTH OF THE MOVEMENT. As the movement grew, organization developed with it. At first the chief emphasis was on

²² D. E. Lindstrom, "Rural Youth Studies in Illinois." Mimeo. by the U. S. D. A. Ext. Serv., 1934.

²³ B. D. Joy, "Organizations and Programs for Rural Young People," Ext. Serv. Cir. 273, U. S. D. A., Nov. 1937, page 9.

²⁴ D. E. Lindstrom, Cleo Fitzsimmons, and G. S. Randall, "Procedures Used by Young Adult Groups to Build Programs of Activities," Ext. Serv. in Agr. and Home Economics, pub., R. S. E. 18, May 1935.

²⁵ Joy, *op. cit.*, page 10.

program. Recently, it has been recognized that a program can be developed and carried through an organization. Most of these organizations have been planned around a uniform name such as "Rural Youth" or "Country Youth Club" with a system of membership delineation (age at least 18, unmarried, not in school, for example); and officers and program committees have been set up. Most of the groups have been county-wide, though a few have been formed in areas smaller than the county.

Programs are usually planned through a committee selected for several meetings. Extension specialists usually help in program planning. The educational programs deal with farm or home problems, personal adjustment, and problems of community life, with those dealing with individual problems, recreation, or social life being most popular.²⁶ The entertainment and recreational features, providing for group participation and for common activity by both sexes, were almost always included in programs. Many groups undertook projects such as music and drama festivals, chorus organization, trips and tours, dances, and sports festivals. Individuals also were induced to take up projects such as landscaping, farm or home production enterprises and partnerships.²⁷

5. OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAINING IN LEADERSHIP. Rural youth conferences, camps, and short courses have been a significant development. A number of states hold annual rural youth conferences,²⁸ some held in connection with farmers week at the College of Agriculture. One- and two-week district and state camps have been held and attendances have grown each year. Short courses, some lasting a week, others as long as three months, have grown more numerous.²⁹

6. NATURE OF LIMITATIONS IN THE WORK. Older rural youth organizations sponsored by Extension Services have made a signifi-

²⁶ *Ibid.*, page 28.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pages 33-34.

²⁸ For example, see H. W. Mumford, "Programs of Interest to Rural Young Adults," U. of Ill. Ext. Ser. mimeo, pub. June 1935.

²⁹ Joy, *op. cit.*, pages 36-37.

cant beginning in the United States but they are still highly selective and tend to appeal to but a very small percentage of the youth over 16 or 18 years of age. A survey carried on by the American Youth Commission in 1936, including 13,528 youth between the ages of 16 and 24 years, showed that 86 percent of the farm youth did not belong to any club, excluding church organizations, and that 4-H Clubs and Future Farmers, which functioned in the neighborhood or community, included 35 percent of those belonging to any club; 30 percent were in local social, athletic or civic groups and school associations had 16 percent as members.³⁰ An exception was Blackford county, Indiana. About one-third of the 302 rural youth between 18 and 28 years of age living on farms in the county in 1940 were members of the Extension sponsored country Life Club; over 50 percent had been members of 4-H Clubs; almost one-half the young men and three-fourths of the young women were church members; 13 percent had been members of Future Farmers.³¹ Illinois Rural Youth reaches only from five to ten percent of the potential members in the state.³²

If Extension Service sponsored older rural youth groups are to reach beyond the 10 or 15 percent who choose and find it possible to attend county meetings, it is evident that the groups must be organized on a community, or smaller than county, unit system. This will not only help in leisure-time programs for many rural youth, but also advance out-of-school educational opportunities and introduce a new community spirit into rural life.³³ Much depends upon the effectiveness with which leaders in such a movement cooperate with local church and school leaders, and especially with the vocational agricultural and home economics teachers who also are responsible for a program for rural youth.

³⁰ Joseph J. Lister and E. L. Kirkpatrick, "Rural Youth Speak," American Youth Commission, mimeo. pub. Feb. 1939, pages 46-48.

³¹ H. F. Ainsworth, *et al.*, "Rural Youth in Blackford County, Indiana," pub. by Purdue University and the U. S. D. A., Dec. 1940, page 49.

³² Personal communication from W. M. Smith, one time Extension Specialist in rural young people's activities, University of Illinois, 1947.

³³ Lister and Kirkpatrick, *op. cit.*, page 89.

The Future Farmers of America

One of the most effective of the school clubs developed in America is the Future Farmers made up of high school students enrolled in vocational agricultural classes. Not all schools have F. F. A. chapters, as they are called, but they are organized in a majority of the rural high schools with vocational agricultural departments.

1. BEGINNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION. Agricultural clubs in schools, later merged into the F. F. A., existed alongside local 4-H clubs from the beginning of the 4-H movement; they began with the teaching of agriculture in the schools in about 1900. State federations of these clubs were formed in the 'twenties; a national federation was accomplished in 1928. One of the first state groups to provide a name for the organization was the Future Farmers of Virginia, organized in 1925; there were at the time numerous state organizations with varied names; these, especially Virginia and New Jersey, helped to bring to national fruition the organization of a movement long under way.³⁴

The membership in the national organization was 204,000 in 1940. On July 1, 1945, there were 6,030 chapters with 376,040 members of all classes, including associate and honorary members; in the same year there were 7,000 departments of vocational agriculture in the United States, and it may be expected that as new departments are organized (for due to a shortage of teachers during the war period this development was halted) the membership and number of chapters will increase. Chapters in 1947 were organized in every state in the Union and in Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

2. THE AIM AND PURPOSES OF THE ORGANIZATION. "The primary aim of the Future Farmers of America is the development of agricultural leadership, cooperation, and citizenship. The specific purposes are as follows:

³⁴ W. A. Ross, "The Future Farmers of America Organization." Washington: U. S. Office of Education, Federal Security Agency, 1938. Also by the same author, "Forward F. F. A.," Baltimore: French-Bray Printing Co., 1939, and "Official Manual Future Farmers of America." Baltimore: French-Bray Printing Co., 1945, page 5.

- (1) to develop competent, aggressive, rural, and agricultural leadership;
- (2) to create and nurture a love of country life;
- (3) to strengthen the confidence of farm boys and young men in themselves and their work;
- (4) to create more interest in the intelligent choice of farming occupations;
- (5) to encourage members in the development of individual farming programs and establishment in farming;
- (6) to encourage members to improve the farm home and its surroundings;
- (7) to participate in worthy undertakings for the improvement of agriculture;
- (8) to develop character, train for useful citizenship, and foster patriotism;
- (9) to participate in cooperative effort;
- (10) to encourage and practice thrift;
- (11) to encourage improvement in scholarship; and
- (12) to provide and encourage the development of organized rural recreational activities." ³⁵

3. THE ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEM. The national organization is composed of chartered State Associations; these in turn are made up of local or active chapters situated in high schools having departments of vocational agriculture. Collegiate chapters may also be organized and chartered under the direct jurisdiction of the respective State associations. Delegates from active chapters meet in State convention, organize, adopt a constitution not in conflict with the national constitution, elect officers, set up a program of work, and then apply to the National Executive Secretary for membership in the national organization.

There are four classes of members in the organization: (1) A person may be an active member while in high school and for three years after high school graduation. He must be a member of a

³⁵ "Official Manual for Future Farmers of America." Baltimore: The French-Bray Printing Co., 1945, page 10.

class in vocational agriculture when he becomes an active member. (2) Anyone who has been an active member may be an associate member during the balance of his life, but he must associate himself voluntarily, pay dues, and otherwise meet organization requirements. (3) Honorary members are elected by chapters as a recognition of their service to vocational agriculture and the F. F. A.; they need not have been members. Members of part-time classes could be F. F. A. members, but very few of them are, for the F. F. A. is an organization of high school boys.

Members are graded and degrees are conferred, much as is done in the Grange. Local chapters confer the degrees of Green Hand and Future Farmer, the State the degree of State Farmer, and the National body the degree of American Farmer. Each degree requires certain attainments in farming, earnings, investment, leadership and scholarship ability, as well as cooperative activities and community service. Ritual is used in the opening and closing of the meetings and in the conferring of degrees, but the organization is not a secret society.

Members elect their own officers: President, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, reporter and adviser. Vocational agricultural teachers act as advisers to the local chapters; state supervisors are the state organization advisers; and there is a national advisory board made up of the Chief of the Agricultural Education Service of the U. S. Office of Education, and the four Regional Advisers and the National Executive Secretary.

4. THE FUNCTIONING OF THE ORGANIZATION. Programs and activities are usually planned carefully well in advance. They are designed not only to supplement regular class work in helping boys become established in farming, but also to become constructive members of the communities in which they live. The emphasis is increasingly on group effort and group relationships, rather than upon individual success.

Regular meetings are held in which the ritual is recited, business is conducted, an educational program is presented, and a social and recreational period is provided for. Standards proposed for judging a chapter program as follows:

(1) Are the objectives comprehensive, definite, adapted to abilities of members, fully accepted by the membership, and related to the objectives of the state and national organizations?

(2) Is the program planned for at least a year in advance to include study of the general problems of agriculture and country life, of community problems and community service, of organization plans and techniques and the application of them to the chapter and its affiliated organizations? Is encouragement given to cooperation within the group and with other groups, to the development of individual members in scholarship, personality, character, leadership, supervised practice, thrift; and is recognition given to achievement in agriculture and country life and time provided for social and recreational activities?

(3) Does the chapter develop relationships with the school, other agricultural groups and other chapters; are most of those who should be members taking part and do they stay with the organization; are they loyal, enthusiastic, and do they take pride in the organization; are the meetings well attended, handled well as for ritual, with programs conducted attractively and business meetings conducted efficiently? Chapters are urged to make satisfactory arrangements for meetings, use care in selecting officers, provide for working committees, and secure active participation on the part of all members.

The committees recommended for each chapter include: (1) to work for supervised farming programs for the members; (2) to outline and sponsor various types of community service; (3) to encourage cooperative activities; (4) to develop leadership among the members; (5) to improve the conduct of meetings; (6) to encourage scholarship; (7) to develop thrift among members by preparing a chapter budget, raising money and operating a chapter thrift bank; (8) to provide pleasure and practice brotherhood through games, suppers, and camping trips; (9) to develop a competitive spirit through educational, athletic, and skill contests; (10) to let people know what the organization is doing through various news avenues, displays, and posters.

An evaluation of programs in 85 chapters in Illinois in 1944-45 showed that most chapters were successful in money raising activities, holding regular meetings and opening and closing them by use of ceremonies; getting members to serve on committees; sending delegates to conventions, taking part in public speaking contests, using parliamentary procedure and getting publicity; encouraging better breeding, stock and crops, holding project tours, making showings at fairs, and working long time programs of projects; holding parent and son banquets and organizing athletic teams; and doing soil testing and milk testing.³⁶

A check of achievements in one chapter revealed such records as 98 percent of members owning their own projects with an average of more than two per boy; a 100 percent participation in a potato project for the chapter; 100 percent participation in surveying home fire hazards; all officers learning parliamentary procedure; three-fourths of the members with their own bank accounts; with 15 regular meetings held, maintaining a 95 percent attendance at meetings; and carrying on a variety of recreational and social activities.³⁷

The close supervision possible by resident teachers, the provision of fairly uniform program suggestions, the close relation between class work and chapter programs, all have their influence on membership and participation in F. F. A. chapters. It is possible that some participation is in a sense forced in that boys feel that they must take part in order to get approval for their regular work; adroitness is therefore very essential on the part of the advisers if the members are to feel that the organization is largely their own and that they may have free and full expression through it. The F. F. A. undoubtedly does offer the boys the kind of experience that is essential if leadership for rural life is to be developed; the tendency to give more and more emphasis to group activities and projects relating to the improvement of the community in which the youth live will give a breadth and richness to the program which

³⁶ J. B. Adams, "A Study of Eighty-Five Future Farmer Chapter Programs of work, Illinois, 1944-1945." Springfield: Ill. Ass'n of the F. F. A.

³⁷ "Program of the Pearl City Chapter of Future Farmers of America." Pearl City, Illinois, 1947.

stress upon economic and vocational programs and activities cannot give. Well rounded programs and joint activities with other groups, including mixed groups or similarly organized groups of girls further broaden and enrich the experience of living in a social world for these boys.

5. **THE NEW FARMERS OF AMERICA.** The Negro equivalent of the F. F. A., the New Farmers of America, has found strength in the South in which can be found many schools with good vocational departments for Negro boys. Its system of organization is similar to that of the F. F. A. and it is equally successful in securing participation and translating its activities into the lives of the boys who take part.

6. **FUTURE HOMEMAKERS OF AMERICA.** Girls enrolled in vocational home economics classes are now being organized into Future Homemakers organizations. These are similar in organization to the F. F. A.

7. **YOUNG FARMERS' CLUBS.** The expansion of the work of vocational teachers into the adult educational field has led to the organization of groups of farm young married couples and young farmers' clubs. These are not a part of the Future Farmer movement but many are conducted in connection with young farmers' classes. Ohio, for example, has about 200 of these young farmers' clubs, and many other states have them, usually organized on a local basis. Groups of young married couples usually consist of from ten to fifteen couples; they plan their own programs, carry on their own discussions, dividing in the early part of the evening by sexes and then coming together for the rest of the time for a discussion of problems of mutual interest. These groups have great potentialities, not only in helping young people become better farmers and homemakers, but also in tackling some of the serious problems of group health, school reorganization, church improvement, recreation, and social welfare in the community.

Collegiate Rural Youth

Growing out of classes in rural life and of groups formed of members of groups at home, such as the 4-H Club, collegiate rural

youth groups have become yet another segment of the rural youth organization picture in the United States.

1. HOW THE MOVEMENT BEGAN. The first collegiate rural life group in America was formed at the University of Illinois in 1913. There a home mission class taught by A. W. Nolan, developed into a country life club and immediately directed its missionary zeal to the promotion of similar clubs in other colleges. . . . The object of the club was to give young men and women from the country, permanently interested in rural affairs, a chance for organized activities regardless of their affiliations with different departments in the University. The members of the club, coming as they did, from the colleges of law, engineering, home economics and the like, would contribute to its strength as well as give back to their own departments, information and inspiration for service to country life. The meetings consisted of student programs, addresses and discussions on rural problems.

"This club soon drew up a constitution which was sent to colleges and normal schools throughout the United States and Canada. Several clubs were formed during the years immediately following, and upon the suggestion of outstanding rural life leaders 'decided to go national.' Officers were elected by the original club, with the advice and consent of the representatives of other clubs, through correspondence, and the organization was designated as the 'Collegiate Country Life Clubs of America.' The first officers elected were Kenyon L. Butterfield, president, Dick J. Crosby, vice-president, and A. W. Nolan, secretary."⁸⁸

2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT CLUBS. By 1922 an estimated 150 to 200 clubs were active at colleges and normal schools in the country. The national organizational history from 1913 to 1922 is not recorded. In 1922 the movement was revitalized; a meeting of its leaders was held that year in connection with the annual meeting of the American Country Life Association; and joint annual meetings were held with A. C. L. A. until 1941, under the name "Youth Section of the A. C. L. A." Since that time the

⁸⁸ Kirkpatrick and Boynton, "Is There An American Youth Movement?," *op. cit.*, pages 11-12.

group has met as an independent organization, changing its name from the Youth Section of the American Country Life Association to Rural Youth of the U. S. A. and including all youth groups.³⁹ Plans in 1947 were to change from an organization to a Conference.

3. CONSTITUENCY AND OBJECTIVES. Local groups affiliated with the national organization have come to include collegiate 4-H Clubs, Student Granges, campus Future Farmers, Rural Life Clubs, Agricultural Clubs and groups with such names as "Apple Blossom," "Blue Shield," "Trail Blazer," "Alpha Chi," etc. Clubs are usually sponsored by the college or university rural education, rural sociology or extension departments or services. Membership is usually open. The objectives vary, but are often built around problems students may face as they go out to rural community service. They aim to dignify rural life, promote an interest in it, and create the right kind of sentiment for it. They advance social and educational programs as well as further specific organization interests.⁴⁰

4. PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES. Activities include regular meetings, special programs, extension trips to put on programs for rural groups in the area near the college or university, making special studies, tours, maintaining rural student loan funds and sending delegates to state and national conferences. Some groups have sponsored state student rural life conferences; in some cases these have developed into state organizations.⁴¹ The leaders in the Youth Section of the American Country Life Association, in order to provide study materials for the constituent groups, began early in the movement to prepare a syllabus, which also served to guide thinking and discussions at the annual meetings. This practice has been continued under the new organization, with more help being given by individual member clubs themselves, some taking

³⁹ "Program and Policies." Washington: Rural Youth of the United States of America, 1947.

⁴⁰ David Cushman Coyle, "Rural Youth in Action," Washington: American Council on Education, 1942, pages 22-26.

⁴¹ Kirkpatrick and Boynton, *op. cit.*, pages 25-27.

the responsibility for preparation and publication in some of the years.⁴²

Youth in Farm Organizations

Each of the great farm organizations in the United States—the Grange, The Farmer's Union, and the Farm Bureau—has a program for youth usually taking the form of an adult-sponsored youth organization. This activity had considerable impetus in the 1930-1940 decade; but activities of farm organizations, especially the Grange, in the interest of youth started early in the history of the organization.

1. YOUTH WORK OF THE GRANGE.

a. *The Juvenile Grange.* As early as the year 1888⁴³ the Grange recognized youth and their interests in the order; Juvenile Granges were organized in connection with subordinate Granges. These juvenile granges were set up to care for the age group 6 to 14, who were below the regular Grange membership, and outside most of the activities which were planned primarily for adults.

Each Juvenile Grange has its own officers and program, including ritual and educational program and social and recreational activities. Often a special room is provided for the juveniles in which the program is carried on under the direction of an adult.⁴⁴ Activities carried on by Juvenile Grange include contests, reports, festivals, exhibits at fairs, and community projects with church groups, Scouts, 4-H Clubs and similar groups.

b. *Programs for older Grange youth.* Recently the Grange has established a policy with respect to youth between 14 and 29 years of age, eligible to become full members of the Grange. The National Grange has recommended the setting up of a Youth Committee in every local, county and state Grange to "see that young people in every Grange are used in promoting the welfare and

⁴² See "Youth and Democracy in the Rural Community." Mt. Pleasant, Michigan: Appleblossom Club, Central State Teachers College, 1941.

⁴³ "Our Most Precious Possessions," leaflet published by the National Grange.

⁴⁴ "The Grange Blue Book," published by the National Grange.

growth of the order," and "to be constantly alert in bringing in qualified youth as members of the order. They should also cooperate with the Juvenile Grange in seeing that eligible juveniles are graduated into the subordinate Grange with fitting ceremony."⁴⁵ The youth committee is also urged to cooperate with other youth groups—4-H Clubs, Future Farmers, Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, Sunday Schools—"always," however, "making Grange membership the goal for young people everywhere."⁴⁶

c. *Student Granges*. In the National Grange meeting in 1927 it was proposed that student granges be organized at colleges and universities; in 1939 approximately a dozen chapters enrolled almost 2,000 students. The objectives of student granges are to train for Grange leadership in the local community, improve rural organization and parliamentary practices, give closer acquaintance with the farm problem, and provide a means for student-farmer contacts. Activities of these Granges include degree team work, installation ceremonies, parliamentary procedure, journalism, rural recreation, dramatics, musical programs, and discussions of educational economic and legislative programs.⁴⁷

d. *Young grangers auxiliary*. In Oregon the Grange has developed what is known as the Young Grangers Auxiliary for the age group 14 to 29. The work follows closely that of the adult order, but the youth have a chance to work toward a solution of their own problems.⁴⁸

The objectives include promoting self-expression and help in solving problems confronting young people, helping the Grange prepare and present programs, aid in increasing membership and attendance, encouraging such activities as sports, drama, music, drill team work, maintaining good will between the young and older members of the Grange, cooperating with other worthy organiza-

⁴⁵ "The Grange and Youth," pamphlet pub. by the National Grange.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ E. L. Kirkpatrick, and Agnes M. Boynton, "Rural Youth in Farm Organizations and Other National Agency Programs," American Youth Commission, July 1939, page 10.

⁴⁸ Bruce L. Melvin, "Youth—Millions Too Many?," Association Press, 1940, page 148.

tions and agencies to promote citizenship, and raising moral standards. Groups are set up on a county-wide basis with units in subordinate groups.⁴⁹

2. JUNIORS IN THE FARMERS' UNION. The Farmers' Union first recognized the need for work among youth in 1931 when a national committee was appointed to work out a program.⁵⁰ Membership in the Farmers' Union, requiring payment of dues, starts at the age of 21. Young people of the ages 16 to 21, whose parents are members, however, are admitted as junior members with all rights and privileges of dues paying members, but dues are not paid. From 8 to 12 years, juvenile members have their own classes and projects; from 13 to 15, inclusive, Junior Reserve members have their own classes and projects.⁵¹

Junior members of the Farmers' Union are eligible to be elected as officers of the adult local union. Special classes meet regularly (monthly, bimonthly, or weekly) in charge of a Junior Leader.⁵² The National Junior Department supplies a basic text for the study of the Farmers' Union program, including that of its cooperatives. Young people are encouraged to visit and work in the cooperative set up by the parent organization. Summer camps, each of a week's duration, are carried on in North Dakota. Cooperative enterprises are set up at camps and at institutes, owned and operated by the students, who elect a board of directors, hire a manager and pay all expenses incurred. Three college locals, located on the campus of the State College at Fargo, Minot State Teachers College, both in North Dakota, and at A and M College at Stillwater, Oklahoma, have organized student cooperatives. At Fargo the students have a cooperative dormitory providing boarding and room for 27 students. These students do field work in surrounding counties,

⁴⁹ Kirkpatrick, and Boynton, *op. cit.*, pages 8-10.

⁵⁰ Grace Talbott Edwards, "Youth Marches On," pamphlet published by National Junior Department of the Farmers' Union, Jamestown, N. D.

⁵¹ Grace Talbott Edwards, "The Junior Member," pamphlet published by the Farmers' Union Cooperative, Education Service, Jamestown, N. D.

⁵² Donald G. Hay, "Social Organization and Agencies in North Dakota," Agr. Exp. Sta. Bul. 288, Fargo, 1937, page 61.

leading discussion and putting on programs for education and entertainment.⁵³

3. THE FARM BUREAU AND RURAL YOUTH. The close cooperation of the Extension Service and the Farm Bureau in many states has been a contributing factor in the development of a rural youth program by the Farm Bureau. The youth organizations of the Extension Service have often been given precedence. Some of the Farm Bureau programs have not been planned particularly to meet the needs and interests of youth; to interest them in membership as they took agricultural responsibilities, had seemed sufficient to the leaders until about 1938.

a. *Development of policy.* The leaders in the national organization hesitated to move rapidly on a program for the older rural youth. "Let us not pit youth against age, or age against youth. . . . Youth will be enriched by closer association with adults. . . . Let us have a program broad enough so that both youth and age can march forward in comradeship and team work to accomplish our goals. . . . To meet this need Farm Bureau organizations in a number of states are developing a definite organized program for older youth."⁵⁴ The policy, therefore, has been to cooperate with the Extension Service in those states where cooperative relations already exist; to provide programs, projects and activities for the Extension Service Rural Youth Groups and to sponsor these groups in the counties; and where cooperative relations do not exist to set up a youth organization such as a Junior Farm Bureau to meet the needs and interests of the older rural youth.

b. *Types of organization.* Since 1928 the State Farm Bureau in Illinois, Michigan, and Iowa have employed full-time representatives to assist rural youth people in their activities. In Indiana and Ohio the State Farm Bureau departments of education handle rural youth work. Minnesota has a large number of Farm Bureau

⁵³ Edwards, "The Junior Member," *op. cit.* See also Melvin, *op. cit.*, page 149.

⁵⁴ W. R. Ogg, "Youth and the Farm Bureau," *The Nation's Agriculture*, Vol. XIII, No. 12, Dec. 1938, pages 14-15.

rural youth clubs. New Hampshire, California and other states are including youth activities in their Farm Bureau programs.⁵⁵

c. *Integration with extension.* The work in Illinois and Iowa illustrates how the state organization integrates its work for youth with that of the Extension Service. More than 9,000 rural young adults in 90 of the 102 counties in Illinois are organized, mostly on a county basis, and hold monthly educational and recreational meetings whose programs are planned in advance by a program committee. The extension specialist in rural young people's activities from the Extension Service in Agriculture and Home Economics, University of Illinois, usually helps in making these plans and the state farm bureau (I. A. A.) specialist in young people's activities helps in developing projects and activities. These are usually "directed primarily toward the development of leadership in the Farm Bureau and cooperative fields, and the creation of a keener interest in the major problems affecting agriculture. Athletic programs are encouraged through the Illinois Farm Sports Festival during the spring and summer months."⁵⁶ Among the projects and activities encouraged are livestock marketing tours to the central markets featuring judging and grading contests, "talk fests" in county, district and state events to encourage extemporaneous speaking on organization topics, caravan tours to visit county and state farm bureau and cooperative enterprises in operation, annual county and state sports and folk festivals, skilled driver's contests, the carrying on of rural youth programs and activities at farm bureau annual meetings, picnics, and the state I. A. A. annual meeting. A state rural youth committee of five with five alternates is selected at the I. A. A. meeting to assist the state director in planning educational activities and a program of youth events for the next annual meeting.⁵⁷ Coordination with the Extension

⁵⁵ Ray Sorenson, "Our Younger Set in Action," *The Nation's Agriculture*, Vol. XV, No. 5, May, 1940, page 2.

⁵⁶ Frank Gingrich, "Young People's Activities," *Anniversary Report of the I. A. A.*, 1941, page 14. See also Ellsworth D. Lyon, "Young People's Activities." *Chicago: Annual Report, Ill. Agr. Ass'n.*, 1946, pages 16 to 18.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pages 15-17.

service program is assured (1) through a state committee made up of representatives from the Extension Service and the I. A. A., and (2) by reason of the fact that rural youth organizations and programs are sponsored in each county by the county Farm Bureau and Home Bureau.

d. *The Junior Farm Bureau.* In Michigan a bona fide Junior Farm Bureau organization is developed under the leadership of a state director of Junior Farm Bureau work. Local and county Junior Farm Bureaus are organized and their work is closely interwoven with that of the adult group. Membership is confined to those 18 to 28 years of age graduated from high school and remaining on farms. More than 2,000 youth in 42 counties were members in 1946. The programs are designed to train for leadership, acquire the art of program building, and to put skills to work in participation. Training for leaders is given in a state camp on financing programs, relationship of the junior and adult farm bureau, use of radio, and developing educational, recreational, and competitive programs and activities in the local groups. The state Junior Farm Bureau with the backing of the adult Farm Bureau, provides apprenticeship appointments to train young men in cooperative commercial service.⁵⁸

Rural Youth in the Community

Farm youth are not without organizational opportunities in the average rural community. True, many of the organizations for youth are sponsored by adult organizations and agencies; state and federal agencies are largely responsible for 4-H Club, Future Farmer, and Rural Youth organizations. But the youth are given a wide latitude in planning and carrying out the programs of these organizations; and farmers' organizations sponsor youth groups, and in most instances youth in these organizations have the freedom to build their own programs and activities. It must be recognized that state or organizational domination is inherent; but in most organizations for and of youth the adults endeavor to give the

⁵⁸ Kirkpatrick and Boynton, "Rural Youth in Farm Organizations," *op cit.*, pages 28-30.

youth all of the responsibility they want or will take. This is as it should be in a democratic society.

1. RESULTS OF SELECTIVITY. An examination of various types of youth organizations in reaching youth in the average rural community, however, reveals that the majority of rural youth are untouched directly by them, although the indirect effect may be far-reaching. Church groups, boy scouts, girl scouts, Y. M. C. A., Y. W. C. A., and local dramatic, musical, athletic, social and educational groups are found among youth in almost every rural community. These must be considered by leaders in any effort to help youth in rural areas develop their own organizations.

a. *Youth not in organizations.* A rapid glance through recent rural youth studies reveals the extent to which youth organizations reach rural youth. Only a few studies have been made as to how rural youth are affected by them.⁵⁹ Studies in Ohio, Illinois, Minnesota, Massachusetts, Georgia and in other states show that churches and Sunday schools form the chief organizational affiliation of youth not in school. About one in five attended no organization. Youth in high school participated in a variety of youth organizations. Among in-school youth the highest percentages participated in church and school club activities; about three-fourths of the out-of-school youth took part in church, and one-half in Sunday school activities.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ See studies by Garnett, Lindstrom, Duthie, and W. A. Anderson, *op cit.*, and Willis Kerns, "Interests, Activities, and Problems of Rural Young Folk." Ithaca, New York: Bulletin 631, Cornell Uni. Agr. Exp. Sta., 1935.

⁶⁰ "The Rural Youth of Ross County, Ohio." Columbus: Mimeo. Bull. No. 140, 141, and 142, Ohio Agr. Exp. Sta., 1941; D. E. Lindstrom, "Wartime Movement of Rural Youth." Urbana: RSM-12, Uni. of Ill. Agri. Exp. Sta., October, 1943; Ruby Christenson, "Older Youth in Rural Minnesota." St. Paul: Pamphlet No. 78, Agr. Ext. Ser., 1941; Lowry Nelson, Donald Mitchell, and Ernst Jacobson, "Some Problems of Minnesota Rural Youth." St. Paul: Bull. 358, Agr. Exp. Sta., 1942; Gilbert Meldrum and Ruth E. Sherburne, "Rural Youth in Massachusetts." Amherst: Bull. No. 386, Agr. Exp. Sta., 1941; J. L. Burrell, "Opportunities for Older Rural Youth." Athens: Bull. No. 493, Ga. Agr. Ext. Ser., 1942; Allen D. Edwards, "Youth in a Rural-Industrial Situation." Blacksburg: Rur. Soc. Rep. No. 2, Vir. Poly. Inst., 1940.

b. *Youth in clubs.* A more hopeful picture is presented by the Blackford County, Indiana, study which showed that of 302 rural youth, 18 to 28, living in the county, about one-half of the young men and three-fourths of the young women were members of either church or Sunday schools; 55 percent of the young men and 61 percent of the young women had been members of 4-H Clubs; about one-fourth were members of the Country Life Club; and 13 percent had been members of Future Farmers.⁶¹ Though this study was taken as being a situation typical of the northeast central part of the state, yet the fact that the data were collected by members of the youth organization might have introduced some bias in the contacts made in favor of members, or easily approached non-members. Be that as it may, these studies indicate the importance of the church, vocational and social educational organizations in the life of rural youth.

2. THE OUTLOOK FOR RURAL YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS. The outlook for organizations for youth in rural areas is uncertain. Too many agency or "outside" organization sponsored efforts may present rural youth with so many opportunities for participation that conflict and confusion may arise. Rural youth, both in the pre- and post-war years, have formed the bulwark of the group from which cities have recruited their new workers. They were called in great numbers to serve in the armed forces, both in World War I and World War II. "Veterans returning to Rural Youth groups have found these groups led by younger people, often high school students. The ex-GI is impatient with the type of program younger members plan and execute, which are usually largely recreational in nature. A major postwar problem for Rural Youth organizations is to become more integrated with rural community life. Rural Youth affords excellent experience in leadership training. Too often Rural Youth members do not apply this leadership experience to *local* community and organizational situations. Finding their own social needs met in the selective county group, they see

⁶¹ Ainsworth, *op. cit.*, page 49.

no problem and sense no responsibility for sharing their privileges with their fellows at home."⁵²

Rural youth can and should take a significant part, not only in advancing their own individual interests, but also in helping to make the rural community in which they live a better place in which to live.

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the three chief characteristics of 4-H Club work?
2. Describe some of the beginnings of 4-H Club work. Which characteristic developed earliest?
3. What limits the effectiveness of 4-H Club work; in what ways does it excel as an educational device?
4. What conditions and events led to the development of rural youth programs? In general, what are the objectives of rural youth programs?
5. Discuss the objectives and the origin of the Future Farmers Organization? How does it differ from 4-H and rural youth work? Outline the work of committees proposed for the organization.

6. What is the nature of the rural life movement among Collegiate rural youth?
7. Compare the programs of the various farmers organizations which have been developed in the interest of rural youth.
8. In what ways are rural youth programs of farmers organizations integrated with those of the Extension Service?
9. Discuss the extent and effectiveness with which the above programs reach the rank and file of rural youth in the community.
10. What do you think should be the chief emphasis in building programs for rural youth?

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Study the 4-H Club movement to find reasons for changing the emphasis from that upon the product to that upon the boy or girl. Duthie, Lindstrom, Erickson.
2. Study the extent to which rural youth programs meet the needs of youth as revealed by youth studies. Ainsworth, Joy, Kirkpatrick, Nelson, Anderson, Allen Edwards, Burrell.
3. Analyse the effectiveness of FFA programs. Ross, Tenny.
4. To what extent are farmers organizations sponsored youth programs designed to meet the interests of youth; to promote the interests of the organization? To what extent is the latter approach justified? Kirkpatrick, Coyle, Sorenson, Edwards, and others.
5. What is the future of rural youth work? American Youth Commission, Brunner.

EXERCISE

Check your community as to the activities of youth organizations: Which ones have an influence? What results can be seen? What changes should be made in the situation?

CHAPTER XV

FARM WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Previous to the twentieth century the conditions of women on the farm was given little attention by farm organizations; most of the concern was for economic advancement through cooperative, political or legislative means, though the Grange, from its beginning, gave women an equal place with men in the order. One of the first national emphasis given to the plight of the woman on the farm was by the American Country Life Commission appointed by Theodore Roosevelt. It pointed out the lack of conveniences in the farm home and the need for educational systems to help farm women improve their living conditions. When the Smith-Lever Act was passed in 1914 it recognized the need for education to improve home as well as farm practices. It gave the impetus and finances for the widespread movement for Extension Service in Home Economics for rural women.

Organization of Rural Women

"Women whose homes are on the farms are taking advantage of the improvement in means of communication and are endeavoring in an organized way to further the development of every phase of activity which will mean better home life on the farm, broader and bigger agricultural opportunities for the future, and an ideal rural community life" wrote Anne M. Evans in 1918.¹ Miss Evans found over 500 women's rural organizations in one Southern State which included homemakers clubs, parent-teacher and school improvement associations, Daughters of Confederacy, cooperative clubs, W. C. T. U., ladies aids, missionary societies and neighborhood and family clubs. Two national farm women's organizations—the National Farm and Garden Association and the National Congress of Farm Women—existed at the time. Miss Evans took note of state organizations of farm women in Illinois, Iowa, Kansas,

¹ Women's Rural Organizations and Their Activities, Bull. No. 719, U.S.D.A., Aug. 1918.

Ohio, Missouri, Michigan, Oklahoma, Texas, and Utah; and especially county organizations such as in Minnesota where a county organization of women resulted from the women of farmer's clubs coming together. These groups anticipated somewhat, and their work merged into that of, the more intensive efforts of Extension Service clubs and Home Bureaus in their emphasis on programs on health, foods, thrift, home conveniences, and rural social and community life.²

The period 1918 to 1920 gave considerable impetus to the organization of farm women's organizations due to World War food needs and the encouragement given everywhere under the slogan "Food will win the war."

Types of Organizations

Organizations for farm women (1) have been developed in connection with general farmers organizations, (2) have been sponsored by adult educational institutions, (3) have been formed within the rural community as part of some state or national women's organization and, (4) have grown up independently and sporadically within the rural community.

Since farm women's organizations formed as part of general farmers organizations and those sponsored by adult educational institutions are most widespread, chief attention will be given to them. This does not imply that the other types are not important; as a matter of fact, women's clubs, mother's clubs, garden or sewing clubs may be the only groups for rural women in some localities.

1. DEVELOPMENT IN CONNECTION WITH FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS.

a. *Women in the Grange.* Recognition of the importance of women in farm organizations was taken by the first Grange leaders in 1868. Due largely to the influence of Carrie M. Hall, the niece of Olive Hudson Kelly, the Founder of the Grange, women were made members of the order on an equal basis with men; this was long before the coming of women's suffrage and

² *Ibid.*, pages 3-15.

equal citizenship rights for women in the United States. Without question this action by the Grange has had much to do with its continued stability, the breadth of its program and high degree of socialization attained by the order through its local meetings. The women of the Grange have continued to hold an important place in its work; in addition to special activities carried on, the lecture hour, which has often been referred to as the heart of the Grange program, is often in charge of women.

Though no separate organization has been set up by the Grange for women, it has provided for organized work by its women members. Each Grange is encouraged to have its Home Economics Department by the National Home Economics Committee. In 1945 every state Grange had such a department. The national committee chairman secures from these state departments, material for the work of committees in state and local groups.

Among the activities reported in local Granges through Home Economics Departments or committees, are aid in building, furnishing and remodeling Grange halls, developing student aid funds, aid to the sick and needy, exhibiting at fairs, helping equip school grounds, giving canning and baking lessons and demonstrations, compiling cook books for members, serving hot lunches in schools, sewing for benefits, promoting music groups, encouraging 4-H Club work, urging home use of home produced products, organizing bazaars, sales, health centers, etc., and sponsoring numerous community and social welfare projects.³

In addition to special committee work the women in Granges have important responsibilities in degree work; they are frequently in charge of juvenile Granges; and they are usually represented on most of the functioning committees of the Grange.

b. *The Associated Women of the Farm Bureau.* The first women's committee was appointed by the American Farm Bureau Federation in 1921, soon after the organization of the parent body. A Home and Community budget was set up in 1924, and in 1927 a full-time director, Mrs. Charles W. Sewell, was appointed. This

³ Cora L. Tucker, Report of the National Home Economics Committee, Proceedings of the National Grange, 1940, pages 141-143.

department gave chief attention to the development of programs for Home and Community Departments in the state, county and local organizations.⁴

Because so many farm women's organizations had developed in the various states, working closely with Farm Bureau, a new organization—The Associated Women of the American Farm Bureau Federation—was formed in 1934. This new organization is a federation of state associations of women's work in the Farm Bureau, Home Bureaus, a few Home Demonstration Councils, and Societies of Farm Women.⁵ The national board of directors is made up of one woman from each, the Northeastern, the Midwest, the Western, and the Southern regions; the officers include a president, vice-president, administrative director, secretary and treasurer.

The organization meets annually at the same time and at the same place as does the American Farm Bureau Federation. It has its own programs and draws up its own set of resolutions. In its eleventh annual session, for example, it submitted 16 resolutions which were accepted by the parent body:

- (1) To develop full and satisfying life for rural people, including home modernization, improving the rural community in terms of its social, educational and spiritual life, and relating the rural community to the nation and to the world;
- (2) To aid in studying family relations, child training and parent education;
- (3) To secure needed appropriations so that every rural home is electrified and to urge research in the use of the existing electrical lines for telephone communications;
- (4) To develop farm home programs equivalent to the urban housing program and to add home building specialists to college staffs;

⁴ Twenty Years with the American Farm Bureau Federation, pub. by the A.F.B.F., 1940, pages 10 and 11.

⁵ The American Farm Bureau Federation in 1938, Annual Report of the House of Delegates, December, 1938.

- (5) To develop a deeper appreciation of spiritual values by seeking larger enrollment in Sunday schools, more liberal financial support, more cooperation in local church programs and more adequate salaries for better trained pastors ;
- (6) To develop facilities in rural areas for hospitals, medical care and improved health through voluntary means ;
- (7) To work for more adequate support for rural education and to work for reorganized school units, for more efficiency and for more adequate educational services ;
- (8) To expand rural library services ;
- (9) To develop more effective programs for safety on the farms, in the homes and on the highways ;
- (10) To support the fertilizer program of the American Farm Bureau Federation as a means of placing life-giving minerals in the soils, to support school lunch programs and further develop nutritional programs ;
- (11) To develop recreational centers for youth and more leadership for youth especially among farm bureau members ;
- (12) To establish living war memorials where possible ;
- (13) To oppose peacetime military conscription ;
- (14) To urge farm women to discuss local, state, national and international issues and to accept responsibilities for world citizenship ;
- (15) To work for better consumer and producer relations ;
- (16) To support the principles of the United Nations Charter, encourage exchange of students, help provide food and clothing for the starving peoples of Europe, testing hopes on the basis of a Christian belief in the brotherhood of man.⁶

The 1946 resolutions called for the establishment of state and county Farm Bureau school committees to aid in bringing about efficient schools adequately financed and capably staffed; the con-

⁶ Resolutions Adopted at the A.F.B.F. Convention, 1945.

tinuation and expansion of the military training program under the auspices of educational institutions; that the Farm Bureau continue its present policies for the development of 4-H Club work, particularly in assuming responsibility for leadership in local clubs; and that all agricultural price policies be directed toward the maintenance of the family-sized farm and the longtime objective of owner-operated farms.⁷

Activities carried on by the organization, chiefly through its directors and the officers, as shown in annual reports from 1937 to 1946, include public speaking contests, advisory service to the National Children's Bureau, participation in conferences on International Peace, support of Federal appropriations for extension work in home economics, provision of program material for local meetings, representation at urban-rural conferences, district and national, sponsorship of an European tour to London to attend the meeting of the Associated Country Women of the World (1939 and 1947), the setting up of an exhibit at annual meetings, taking the lead in the creation of sentiment for adequate rural medical care and hospitalization, attendance at numerous national, regional, state and local meetings and conferences, including the national rural and urban conference, the national rural youth conference, the conference of the American Country Life Association and similar meetings of interest and significance. In the war years the Associated Women collected for the Seeds for Britain campaign, collected funds for China Relief, made visits to WAC camps, sold war bonds, collected scrap paper, contributed to blood bank campaigns, assisted with the USO, purchased a Red Cross Clubmobile and in general gave every possible help to the war efforts.

The programs of the organization in the postwar period included the holding of significant rural-urban conferences, the support of programs for adequate medical care and hospitalization, and in the states a survey of health facilities (Minnesota), the support of county health units (Missouri), carrying on educational work on proposed rural school legislation (Iowa). General support was

⁷A.F.B.F. Official News Letter. Chicago: A.F.B.F. Editorial Office, Vol. 22, Dec. 25, 1946, page 7.

given to international efforts; the organization was represented at the San Francisco Conference to frame the United Nations Charter. In addition the president appeared before the Senate Committee on Education and Labor, on health and legislation, and presented statements on federal aid to education and on appropriations for extension service.⁸ More than 1,200 women from 41 states attended the national conference in 1946.

c. *Women in the Farmers' Union.* Though no separate organization is set up, the women of the family of Farmers' Union members who are over 21 years of age are honorary members of the Union. They vote, hold office and participate on committees in the locals. Though at first the Farmers' Union was a men's organization, of recent years more and more women are taking part in the work of the organization.⁹

2. FARM WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS SPONSORED BY ADULT EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

a. *Household science clubs.* One of the earliest organizations for farm women came out of the Farmers' Institutes. In recognition of the work of women in the farm home departments of household science were set up in cooperation with Farmers' Institutes. At first these provided only for the one meeting or series of meetings per year, but later clubs of women in communities were formed to discuss matters pertaining to home and household duties. In Illinois this development started with a school held during the State Fair. A Department of Household Science was formed at the annual Farmers' Institute meeting in Champaign in 1898; it was then called the Illinois Association of Domestic Science. In 1908 the name was changed to Department of Household Science of the Illinois Farmers' Institute. In recent years the work of the Farmers' Institutes in Illinois has been taken over by the Extension Service in Agriculture and Home Economics. Though a number of household science clubs still function, the tendency has

⁸ Annual Reports of the Associated Women of the American Farm Bureau Federation for 1942, 1943, 1944, and 1945.

⁹ Gladys Talbott Edwards, *The Farmers Union Triangle*, pub. by the Farmers' Union Education Service, Jamestown, N. D., 1941, page 145.

been to merge this work with Extension Work in Home Economics and for the clubs to become inactive or change into Home Bureau Units.

b. *Extension work in Home Economics.* The most extensive of the organizations among farm women are those sponsored by the Extension Service in Home Economics of the Colleges of Agriculture. Extension work among farm women began in 1913 and spread rapidly, especially in the Southern states. By 1933 more than a million rural women and girls were active members of groups organized to carry on extension work in home economics.¹⁰ By 1938 membership among women alone was 1,104,490.¹⁰ By 1940 the membership had reached 1,140,723.¹¹ By 1942 the membership in all forms of Home Economics clubs sponsored by the various state extension services was 1,178,178, and these women were in over 54,000 clubs.¹² This was the last year when reports of membership in such groups were reported, for a change was made in the system of organization which affected many states, especially those in which the clubs were carried on in a relatively unorganized manner.

Spurred on by the demands of wartime programs that called for contacts with every farm family, the Extension Service organized and trained 650,000 farm men and women as neighborhood leaders. One man and one woman were selected for about every 15 farm families in every rural community. "Many of them were selected by their neighbors. Each neighborhood leader assumes responsibility for taking urgent war information affecting farm people from extension agents to every farm family in his or her neighborhood. About 50,000 serve as community leaders, each responsible for helping supervise the selection and work of a

¹⁰ Grace E. Frysinger, "Home Demonstration Work." Washington: Misc. Pub. No. 178, U.S.D.A., 1933, pages 1 and 2. Gladys Gallup, and Florence L. Hall, "Progress in Home Demonstration Work." Washington: Ext. Serv. Spec. Cir. No. 319, U.S.D.A., 1940, page 11.

¹¹ M. C. Wilson and H. W. Porter, "Extension Activities and Accomplishments." Washington: Ext. Ser. Cir. No. 363, U.S.D.A., 1940, page 12.

¹² "Report of Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, 1941-42." Washington: Ext. Ser., U.S.D.A., 1943, page 13.

number of neighborhood leaders.”¹³ With the coming of peace there has been a resumption of the club organization in the various states.

The system for carrying on home economics extension work varies from state to state. Some states do not have organized groups, preferring to organize groups or enroll interested persons in the various fields of instruction or activity which may be included in the program for that year. In states which have organized clubs, two types of organization have developed: (1) the home demonstration clubs somewhat loosely organized and in most cases requiring no membership fee; and (2) home bureau organizations which have dues, and which are formed into county and state organizations.

1. Home Demonstration Clubs. Since it would be impossible for one home demonstration agent in a county to make visits to all farm and rural non-farm women of the county, the effort is made to meet these homemakers in groups. Each group, consisting on an average of from 12 to 25 women,¹⁴ elects its own officers and plans its own program. The groups meet at regular intervals, usually once a month, (generally in the home of one of the members). Committees are appointed as needed.

“The community is the accepted unit of organization, the community being any area in which people normally have such contacts as those connected with schools, churches, and recreation. . . . The meetings are conducted on a business-like basis.”¹⁵ In addition to the regular officers, most clubs have project or local leaders who receive training at county local leader training meetings and in turn take the information thus gained back to their groups. Groups are encouraged, also, to devote some time in each meeting to recreation, leaders being appointed to teach songs and games which can be used for various other types of meetings.

Activities are not confined to local club meetings. County-wide committees are often set up, elected by the local groups, to advise

¹³ *Ibid.*, page 2.

¹⁴ Frysinger, *op. cit.*, page 6.

¹⁵ Gallup and Hall, *op. cit.*, page 11.

with the county home demonstration agent regarding the work for the county, thus acting as a planning and promotional body. In many states county-wide federations of local groups have been formed; and state federations of county groups have developed.¹⁶

The organization of these local groups, especially in cases in which dues are charged, usually results in the development of an interest group: some family is left out because they feel they cannot afford to belong. The informal approach thus has the advantage that such families can offer no such excuse. The organization, however, calls for initiative on the part of the membership in helping to keep the work going, resulting in the development of leadership not easily found in the unorganized type of work.

The home demonstration club movement has grown to such proportions that a National Home Demonstration Council was formed. The organization meeting was held in Washington, D. C., on June 1, 1936. Membership is by state organization. A president is elected to serve for three years; the president selects a state leader from each of four regions in the country to serve as an advisory committee. In 1946 twenty-five state councils were members, representing over 500,000 women enrolled in extension clubs. The National Council, among other things, started the proceeding which resulted in the proclamation by the National Extension Director of a National Home Demonstration Week.¹⁷

2. Home Bureau Organizations. Home Bureaus have developed on much the same pattern in two states: Illinois and New York. In Illinois the first county organization, then named the Kankakee County Home Improvement Association, was formed in 1915; the name was changed to "Home Bureau" in 1918. During that year home bureaus were formed in Adams, Livingston and McLean counties. These organizations, with their local units, were the medium through which the county home demonstration agent, or home adviser, as she came to be known in Illinois, carried on her work.

¹⁶ Frysinger, *op. cit.*, page 6.

¹⁷ Personal communication from Mrs. L. H. Killey, immediate past president, Monmouth, Illinois, 1947.

The policies guiding the present organizations were formulated by Isabel Bevier, one-time Head of Home Economics at the University of Illinois, in collaboration with W. F. Handschin, one-time Director of Extension, following the passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914. The chief departure from systems used in other states was to use membership fees to pay local expenses rather than to depend entirely upon appropriations from county boards of supervisors. The women's activities became separate from the work of the county farm bureaus. The policy of having a women's organization set up on a membership basis requiring dues sufficient to carry on organizational work in the counties and in the state, left the Extension workers free to carry on the educational work through the organization.

At present the educational work is under the direction of a state leader of Home Advisers, who, with a staff of specialists and assistants, work with the county home advisers and the local leaders in developing and carrying on the educational programs. The county organization is a federation of neighborhood or community home bureau units, each with its officers and local leaders. The presidents of the local units form the county advisory council which works with a smaller Executive Board made up of a president, vice-president, secretary-treasurer, and usually five directors. The county officers are elected by the members from all the units, gathered in an annual meeting. The executive Board meets once a month to transact business. The advisory council meets with the Executive Board at least twice a year; the program for the ensuing year is made up at such a meeting from wishes expressed in local meetings held the month or months previous.¹⁸

The program thus democratically developed usually consists of major lessons which may consist of material on foods, clothing, home furnishings, household management, health, parental education and child care, and other similar subjects of importance at the time, to be carried to the units by the county home adviser or trained local leader; and minor lessons carried by local leaders who

¹⁸ "The County Home Bureau." Urbana: Cir. HE-P3, Ext. Ser. in Home Economics, U. of Ill., 1946.

first attend county training schools; in all counties the local leaders are used for approximately half of the major lessons. The local units also appoint committees on health improvement, school organization, school lunches, music, recreation or on projects, such as girls' 4-H Club work, county chorus, support for county health department, fair exhibits, etc., which the unit decides to carry on.

All members pay dues. Each county home bureau determines the membership fee. All money received from membership fees is used for the running expenses of the association and remains in the county. It is paid out only on order of the executive committee. The fees range from \$2 to \$5, most of the recently organized counties holding to the \$5 fee. Counties having fees less than \$5 often find it necessary to raise additional funds to meet the needs of the organization. County boards of supervisors are empowered to appropriate money for the extension program in the county; some county home bureaus secure part of their funds from this source. By 1946 every home advisor was assured of at least \$2,280 from state and federal funds; the county associations provided the balance of the adviser's salary from funds raised in the county.¹⁹

The county associations of the Home Bureau were federated into the Illinois Home Bureau Federation in 1922. The state organization has a full set of officers and an Executive Board similar to that of the county organization. The annual meeting is held in connection with the College of Agriculture Farm and Home Week at which time new officers are elected. The state Federation is affiliated with the Associated Women of the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Home Demonstration Council and the Associated Country Women of the World.

The New York State Home Bureau had its beginnings in the 1918 World War campaign for food. It is not entirely separate from the Farm Bureau, for each county has a joint Farm and Home Bureau Federation that handles finances and certain other matters; but it is independent "in the formulation of its plans of work and

¹⁹ "The County Home Bureau." Urbana: Pamphlet pub. by the Ext. Ser. in Agr. and Home Ec., U. of Ill., 1940, and personal communication from Mrs. Kathryn Van Aken Burns, State Leader of Home Advisers, Urbana, Ill.

the responsibility for carrying them out. Women pay dues to their own organization, secure their own appropriations from boards of supervisors and accept thankfully their own appropriations for county work from state and federal funds."²⁰

Each county has its own organization "in charge of a Home Demonstration agent"²¹ and builds its own program. The plan is fitted to the needs of both country and city women. The work is carried on in the county through community units, each with its officers and committees. County leader training meetings are held. Annual meetings are held on a county, district and state basis, the district meetings often having as many in attendance as the state meeting.

The state Home Bureau is represented on the State Conference Board of Farm Organizations, on the State Agricultural Committee, on the State Land Use Planning Committee and on the State Agricultural Society, as well as on the advisory committee of the College of Agriculture and of Home Economics. The state organization participates in the state joint Legislative Forum which meets weekly during the legislative session and it has representatives in all state-wide women's organizations.²²

The organization assists with Home Economics at the State Fair and provides scholarships in the College of Home Economics at Cornell. A cordial relationship exists with the Farm Bureau; annual conventions are held at the same time and place and a number of other joint activities are carried on. Much of the work is carried on through the fifteen state committees. The organization maintains a "Federation News Letter" and a "Health Letter," the latter prepared and issued in cooperation with the state Health Department.²³

In one New York county, according to a study made, about one in five women are in the Home Bureau. Membership is increasing

²⁰ Mrs. H. M. Wagenblass, "New York Women Carry Their Own Pocket-books." Chicago: *The Nation's Agriculture*, Vol. XVI, No. 2, Feb., 1941, page 15.

²¹ *Ibid.*, page 15.

²² *Ibid.*, page 15.

²³ *Ibid.*, page 21.

more in the cities, both numerically and relatively, than on the farms or in the villages . . . there appears to be an unconscious selective process operating in the determination of those farm women who belong to, and are active in, the Home Bureau. This process brings together the farmers' wives who live on the best farms, have been in the community longest, are farm owners, and in the higher economic grouping."²⁴ This study showed, moreover, that although there were almost as many non-farm as farm women in the organization, 14 per cent being city residents, yet the program is of value to both. The problem of reaching the less aggressive families, both on farms and in towns, has not been effectively solved by Home Bureau organization; this is true also of the Farm Bureau and many other interest organizations.

International Organization

Probably one of the most significant developments relative to organization for farm women was the organization of the Associated Country Women of the World. This organization, made up of 69 national, provincial and state organizations of country women from 34 countries, places the spot-light on the important place farm women play in the life of the countryside.²⁵

1. FORMATION OF THE ORGANIZATION. The first step in the formation of the A. C. W. W. came in 1929 when Lady Aberdeen, president of the International Council of Women, and a small group of women representing a few nations, met and planned for a meeting of rural women's organizations in Vienna in 1930. At Vienna a Liaison Committee was set up representing 31 national rural women's organizations in 26 nations, and in June, 1933, a meeting was held in Stockholm, Sweden, attended by 34 groups from 26 nations, at which time the name was selected, a constitution was adopted and an executive committee selected. This executive committee has endeavored to hold monthly meetings and an annual

²⁴ W. A. Anderson, "Farm Women in the Home Bureau." Ithaca: Mimeo. Bull. No. 3, Cornell University Agr. Exp. Sta., Oct. 1941, pages 1601-2.

²⁵ "Proceedings of the Third Triennial Conference, Associated Country Women of the World." Washington: Gov't Printing Office, 1937, page 3.

meeting since that time. The objectives of the organization are "to provide a means of communication between country women's organizations all over the world and furnish opportunities for them to consider problems of mutual interest, in the sincere belief that country women would appreciate and take advantage of the means thus provided; that it might further the common object of all the organizations in raising the standard among women in rural areas with regard to their economic and social activities, and cultural opportunities, for home and community life; and that it might encourage the country woman to feel herself a necessary link in the chain of human endeavor, not only as a practical partner in the world's business, but as a spiritual force in human affairs."²⁶

2. MEMBERSHIP IN THE ORGANIZATION. Membership is on a national, provincial, or state basis for all associations of country women whose aims are in harmony with those of the A. C. W. W.; sections for men's organizations and associations of which the majority of the members are country women, are also provided. Place is made for corresponding societies which may not be eligible for membership, but which are in sympathy with the movement. Individuals may become life or contributing members.²⁷

In 1936 there were 37 national organization memberships, 35 state or provincial memberships, 1 regional organization membership and 23 others. There were 16 membership organizations from the United States, 16 from England, 12 from Canada, 7 from Australia, 5 from South Africa, 4 from Switzerland, 3 from Denmark, 2 each from Finland, Ireland, New Zealand, the Netherlands, and Wales, and 1 each from the other countries. Thirty countries were then represented in the membership of 96 organizations, three of which were international and 19 county organizations (from England and Wales).²⁸

3. MEETINGS AND THE SYSTEM OF ORGANIZATION. The plan was to hold the meetings at least triennially, but the World War II prevented. The president and vice-president and six members of

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pages 3 and 4.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, page 5.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pages 6 and 7.

the executive committee are elected at the meetings. Each member organization may select an Executive Committee member. Membership fees are not set for organizations, each determining the amount to be contributed; life members contribute one pound, contributing members and corresponding societies each one pound.

The liaison committee in the United States of which Mrs. Spencer Ewing of Bloomington, Illinois, was chairman, and which has served to maintain contact with the central office at London, has held regular annual meetings in this country.

The Executive Committee of the organization, meeting in London late in June, 1946, voted to hold the triennial conference in 1947; it was held in Holland. Delegates were present at the Executive Committee meetings from 22 countries including the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Ceylon, India, Burma, N. Rhodesia, S. Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Kenya, N. Iceland, Erie, England, France, Holland, Sweden, Denmark, Palestime, Scotland, Estonia and Switzerland.²⁹

4. THE PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE. Probably the most significant conference was the one held in Washington, D. C., in 1936. Its program included reports from delegates as to the work of their organizations; group discussions on problems and possibilities in rural life, health services in rural areas, library services in rural areas, motion pictures, music, organizations for rural young people, radio, study of local history, cooperation between country women and the rural press, the country woman and the economic problem, the country woman's use of rural resources, electricity in rural life, marketing of home products, town people in the country as workers, residents and holiday workers; and lectures and addresses by noted speakers.³⁰

In summarizing the discussions of the 1936 conference, C. C. Taylor declared " . . . a meeting of over 6,000 women from 22 nations, from any walk of life or from all walks of life, is a momen-

²⁹ "The Once Over." Washington: Extension Service Review, Vol. 17, No. 9, Sept. 1946, page 128.

³⁰ Proceedings of the Associated Country Women of the World, *op. cit.*, pages 18-19.

tous occasion . . . here 6,000 (country women) stand for childhood rights, peace, universal elements of life, art and sentiment . . . (and) for the things which are indigenous to rural life—folk-craft, folk-music, folk-literature, history and philosophy—and insist that these things and their values not be lost when urbanized culture enters rural life.”³¹

Resume: Farm women are developing a strong local, state, national and international voice in rural affairs. Most of the organizations for farm women are sponsored by educational institutions such as the Extension Services in Home Economics; but these and organizations for women growing out of farmers' organizations have a large share in running their own organization. They are set up so that the voice of every member may be heard through community, county, state, national and international units, associations and federations. Though not more than one-fifth of the farm and rural women are directly affected, the indirect influence is great. By developing organizations in which every farm woman can take part, farm women's organizations are certain to have a great local, state, national and international influence.

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³¹ *Ibid.*, pages 200-201.

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What were the earliest efforts to meet the problems of farm women?
2. In what ways has the Grange provided for the interests of rural women?
3. What are the chief emphases given to women's work in the Farm Bureau?
4. What is the role of women in the Farmers' Union?
5. How extensive is the work for rural women as developed by the Extension Service?
6. Describe the system of organization and the program of work of home demonstration clubs.
7. How are home bureau organizations developed? What is the system for carrying on the educational work in them?
8. What was the origin of household science clubs? What is the nature of their activities?
9. Discuss the constituency and program of the Associated Country Women of the World.
10. Of what significance is the movement?

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Study the work of women in farmers organizations. How is it integrated; in what ways is it separate from the work of the general organization? What is the trend, away from or toward greater integration? Edwards, Tucker, Wagenblass and other references.
2. Compare the membership, programs, activities, and results of home demonstration clubs and those of home bureaus. In what respects is the one system to be preferred to the other? Banc, Frysinger, Gallup, and other references.
3. Study the work of rural women's organizations in the various countries. How does it compare in objectives, method, program and activities? Proceedings of the Associated Country Women of the World.

EXERCISE

What organizations are active or have an influence among rural women in your community? Which types seem to be of most benefit? Why? What changes do you think should be made? Why?

CHAPTER XVI

FARMERS' COOPERATIVE ORGANIZATIONS

"The beginning of formal cooperation among farmers in this country started somewhat over one hundred years ago. Undoubtedly it was an outgrowth of an age-old tradition of mutual aid among farmers in their rural communities.

"In its first feeble beginnings, agricultural cooperation was confined to a few simple things close to the individual farms. This type of activity increased in strength and economic significance as experience accumulated. On the whole, however, these early organizations were strictly community enterprises, giving small but useful services in a small way."¹

Cooperatives, thus, have been counted as a significant form of farmer's organization. As contrasted with the general farmer's organization, the cooperative is designed for a specific purpose. The general farmer's organization, such as the Grange or the Farm Bureau, was, as we have seen, all-inclusive and concerned with the general welfare of the farmer. The cooperative has been more direct in that its main purpose was to provide for money savings or the providing of better quality of goods or service for its members, though it may indirectly interest itself in the general welfare of the community.²

The Place of the Cooperative in Agriculture and Community Life

I. RELATIONSHIP TO THE FARM BUSINESS. Cooperation in agriculture can be regarded merely as a business venture. "To fully understand the place of farmers' cooperatives in American agriculture one must view them as an integrated part of farming. If one looks at the cooperative merely as a business he will conclude

¹ Homer L. Brinkley, "Annual Message of the President." Washington, D. C.: Proceedings of the Annual Meeting, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, 1946, page 3.

² B. H. Hibbard, "Marketing Agricultural Products." New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1921, page 187.

that it is similar to any other business. However, when viewed as the marketing or procurement part of the farm it looks quite different. Integration within agriculture is quite in contrast with integration in industry. In industry for the most part we have combined large production units with large marketing and procurement functions. In agriculture we have combined very small production units with larger and efficient-sized marketing and procurement functions. This has been possible through the application of the principles of cooperation. In this way it has been possible to combine the most efficient type of production on the family farm with the most efficient and optimum size marketing and procurement units. . . . This integration of the cooperative with the farm is the key to its non-profit operation which in turn explains why it has no income of its own . . . as do profit organizations."³

2. RELATIONSHIP TO FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS. The history of economic cooperatives and that of general organizations among farmers has been so closely interwoven in the United States that one type cannot be studied without reference to the other.⁴ Most cooperative activity in the last half of the 19th Century in the United States developed out of and as a part of the work of general farmers organizations. (An important exception was the cooperative creamery movement in Minnesota which started well before the turn of the century.) It was not until the beginning of the 20th Century that cooperatives launched out independent of such organizations as the Grange or the Alliance. In some cases the cooperative ventures of farmers organizations outlived the farmers organizations themselves.

a. *Cooperatives to purchase supplies.* Cooperatives launched by the farmers organizations in the period following the Civil War were usually for the purpose of purchasing supplies, not only for the farm, supplying such things as twine, fertilizer, seed or feed, but

³ Personal communication from John H. Davis, Executive Secretary, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, July 30, 1946.

⁴ Henry H. Bakken and Marvin H. Schaars, "The Economics of Cooperative Marketing." New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., 1937, pages 49 to 51.

also for the home, supplying flour, sugar or other household goods. The first cooperatives were local; with the coming of farmers' clubs it was possible to pool orders for farm and home supplies and thus make savings on purchases. The early movement for cooperation was given impetus, however, as the result of an effort to avoid the exploitation of middlemen. Farmers sought a means of buying direct in order to cut down high retail costs. The result of these two drives was that many local buying cooperatives were formed after the Civil War. Many failed, however, because of poor management, lack of credit, unscrupulous competition, and disloyalty of members.

b. *Earlier ideological efforts.* The growth of cooperation in Europe had some influence on early American developments. Even such projects as those of Robert Owens to set up cooperation as a means to bring about a new moral world, or of William Thompson to rebuild a society through self-help cooperatives, or those of Dr. William King to build a new society through cooperation⁵ were significant in their time; and they resulted in such settlements as New Harmony, Indiana, and similar socialized experiments.

c. *The Rochdale idea.* The Rochdale ideology was more influential, however, than the socialized experiments. In the plan private ownership of capital was linked with its collective use—one-man-one-vote, limited returns on capital, cash sales, and savings divided with those who patronize the cooperative—these were the guiding principles which have been at the heart of the drive resulting in the vast cooperative enterprise growing out of the venture. It had other independent beginnings for a similar movement started in Sweden even before the Rochdale society was organized in England. Here, as in Ireland, the plan was adapted to farmer's needs "first (as) an association to collect farm products from farmers and sell on behalf of farmer members; second a supply association or retail society to supply goods and services to farmers as consumer-minded producers."⁶

⁵ William Alfred Hinds, "American Communities." Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1908.

⁶ Bakken and Schaars, *op. cit.*, pages 25-34.

d. *The change to emphasis upon selling.* Toward the latter part of the period from 1860 to 1890, the purchasing cooperatives, some of which had been formed on the Rochdale patterns, began to fail; marketing cooperatives began to grow—cotton, grain, livestock and fruit—many arising out of the work of the Grange or the Alliance, and some growing up independently. The primary motivating factors which threw producer cooperation into the fore in the United States were the disparity between agricultural and other prices, the growing commercialization of agriculture, specialization in production, and the excessive cost of marketing.⁷ Also, farmers soon learned that greater savings could be made in handling producer goods—grains and livestock of which the individual farmer handled a large supply relative to his supply needs for household goods. This has led some purchasing cooperatives to limit their purchases to goods used in production on the farm. But in the entire period up to 1900, not more than 500 associations of all sorts which came into existence survived.

3. SOCIAL ASPECTS OF COOPERATION. Cooperatives are social organizations in that they require human and group association. Barton points out that the peculiar genius of the movement is that "it builds on the capacity of its leaders and members to work together. It puts a premium on loyalty and solidarity. Cooperative business, especially in the beginning, rarely possesses as much capital or experience as older business forms. It must depend on the understanding and loyalty of the cooperating group." It is more than a "cold, hard business proposition. . . . As a spirit and a social technic (cooperation) is as old as human history. It is the foundation of all genuine 'folk' society, of rural neighborhoods."⁸

a. *Mutual aid.* As has been indicated, the earliest forms of cooperation were of the mutual-aid type. Cooperatives formed in Europe in the early periods of the movement frequently were organized by church leaders among relatively poor people to help

⁷ N. L. Sims, "Elements of Rural Sociology." New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1940, pages 452-453.

⁸ John Barton, "Cooperation: Principles, Philosophy, and History," mimeo. pub., Department of Agricultural Economics, Univ. of Ill., 1936.

alleviate their distress or provide services or benefits otherwise denied them. Such mutual-aid efforts were often to gain social as well as economic ends. Early cooperatives in the United States, moreover, were of the mutual-aid type—trade-work and threshing rings, for example, being common among early settlers and later among small farmers everywhere.

b. *The social technics in cooperation.* It is well to understand, therefore, that though the obvious objective is economic, the system of association in cooperative organization is essentially social. People with common interests or needs get together to work out a plan for meeting those needs. This act of association is the chief social aspect of the cooperative: When the people meet for any purpose, be it buying, selling, or whatever it may be, their association is a social act. This is an important aspect of all cooperation. Whenever association of members is a real and personal thing, cooperation is at its best. When it becomes secondary, that is, when members give over chief concern except for economic returns to the management or to a small executive group the cooperative is in danger of rapid disintegration as a cooperative—it soon becomes merely a business concern.

c. *Emphases in European forms.* Cooperatives in France and England took the form of Friendly Societies to help the sick and care for the needy. In Belgium, fertilizer purchasing cooperatives developed, primarily as a soil conservation measure. In Germany credit cooperatives helped small village-centered farmers free themselves of bondage from money lenders.⁹ In Denmark cooperatives developed with and for the small dairy farmers for social and educational as well as economic purposes. In Ireland the rule of the "gombeen man" was ended through cooperation, and with its growth there often came the development of community social centers as well.¹⁰

In many of these early European cooperative endeavors the leadership was taken by socially-minded men, ministers and priests.

⁹ Hibbard, *op. cit.*, page 186.

¹⁰ George E. Russell, "The National Being." New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916.

A Catholic priest started the first fertilizer cooperative in Belgium; a religious philosopher, Bishop Grundvig, is looked upon as the father of cooperative idealism in Denmark. Cooperation was thus used not only as an instrument for economic advancement, but also to advance educational and social conditions as well; the system of organization was social, "based on mutual trust of the cooperators" and in many cases deeply rooted in a religious philosophy, the leaders being motivated by religious principles which could be put into practice through cooperation.

The Expansion of Cooperation in the United States

The period of expansion of producer cooperatives started in the first decade of the 20th Century. Loose federations of locals were formed and the first federations appeared. In the second decade there was a "rapid expansion of local cooperatives, an extensive multiplication of federations, and marked growth of great centralized agencies. Grain, fruit, vegetables, cotton, tobacco, and livestock marketing companies were the outstanding lines of development."¹¹

1. ENABLING LEGISLATION FOR COOPERATION. Equal immunity with other groups to anti-trust laws and to place cooperatives on a basis of equality with other enterprises was needed in order to encourage the cooperative movement. Laws were enacted in most states to "promote, foster and encourage orderly marketing of agricultural products through cooperation; and to eliminate speculation and waste; and to make the distribution of agricultural products between producer and consumer as direct as can be effectively done; and to stabilize the marketing of agricultural products."

National legislation relating to cooperative organization included "Section 6 of the Clayton Act of 1914 and the Capper-Volstead Act of 1922 . . . (exempting farmers' cooperatives from the Federal Anti-trust laws) . . . the cooperative marketing Act of 1926 (creating), in the United States Department of Agriculture, a division (now a part of the Farm Credit Administration) to

¹¹ Sims, *op. cit.*, page 454.

promote the knowledge of cooperative principles and practices through research, service, and education; (and) . . . the Agricultural Marketing Act, passed by Congress in 1929, (promoting) the effective merchandising of agricultural commodities in interstate and foreign commerce . . . by encouraging the organization of producers into effective associations or corporations under their own control for greater unity of effort in marketing and by promoting the establishment and financing of a farm marketing system of producer-owned and producer controlled cooperative associations and other agencies." ¹²

Though some centralized associations failed, there was a steady growth in membership; many locals were merged into county and regional associations. Producer cooperation became established in the United States. New forms—rural electrification, cold storage locker, and production credit associations—came into being.

2. USE OF GOVERNMENT FUNDS TO ADVANCE COOPERATION. Just as other forms of business were given government aid, so it was felt cooperatives should also be aided. Government aid was given, first by the Federal Farm Board through the Agricultural Marketing Act, then in the form of government-sponsored cooperatives in which federal funds were loaned to such as credit cooperatives and rural electric cooperatives. The loans were paid back out of savings and the management then turned over to the farmer members. In addition, farmers on small tracts of land were encouraged to develop modern mutual-aid cooperatives—several farmers going together to buy a tractor, for example, with the help of the Farm Security Administration. "More than 10,000 of these small cooperatives are already doing business. With FSA loans they have bought tractors, combine harvesters, cotton gins, fertilizer and lime spreaders, spraying tools, saw mills, feed grinders, hay balers, mowers, and many other kinds of equipment. Nearly 1,500 groups of farmers have borrowed money from FSA to buy co-op bulls, stallions, boars, jacks and rams." ¹³

¹² French M. Hyre, "Co-ops in Agriculture." Washington: Cir. C111, Farm Credit Administration, 1940, pages 18-20.

¹³ "Co-ops for the Small Farmer." Published by the FSA, USDA, 1940.

3. EXTENT OF COOPERATION. In the 1943-44 marketing season 10,300 cooperative associations were active. This was only 150 less than for the preceding season. In 1929-30 the number had reached 12,000. "Although many new associations were organized during the year, not enough of them were reported as actually operating to offset those that went out of business for various reasons. A few associations failed; some found it difficult to function under existing conditions, and closed for the duration of the war; a few found it to their advantage to merge with other cooperatives; and still others were dropped as they no longer met the requirements of a cooperative."¹⁴

Membership in all forms of farmers' cooperatives has been estimated at 4,250,000 for the years 1943-44; in 1935-36 the figure stood at 3,660,000; in 1915 only 651,186 members of farmers' cooperatives were recorded.¹⁵ Since one farmer may belong to two or more cooperatives, these figures do not represent that number of farmers. Estimates place the number of different producers who are members of cooperatives at 2,000,000, "or about one-third of all growers, ranchers and dairymen in the United States."¹⁶

Up to the World War II period business done by farmer cooperatives reached its peak in 1929-30 when it was \$2,500,000,000. It decreased more than a billion dollars during the 1930-35 depression, increased to \$2,400,000,000, in 1937, and stood at \$2,100,000,000 in 1938.¹⁷ During the 1943-44 season the volume of business was \$5,160,000,000.¹⁸ All through the period from 1913 to 1944 most of the cooperative business was done in the East North Central, West North Central and Pacific states. From 1934 to 1944 California ranked first; since 1940 Minnesota has ranked second and Illinois third. The five other high states in 1943-44 were New York, Iowa, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Missouri.¹⁸

¹⁴ Grace Wanstall, "Statistics of Farmers' Marketing and Purchasing Cooperatives." Washington: Rep. No. 83, FCA, USDA, 1945.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, and R. H. Ellsworth, "Statistics of Farmers' Marketing and Purchasing Cooperatives." Washington: Rep. No. 21, FCA, USDA, 1940.

¹⁶ "Producer Co-ops in Action." Washington: Cir. A16, FCA, USDA, 1941.

¹⁷ Wanstall, *op. cit.*, page 3, and Ellsworth, *op. cit.*, page 8.

¹⁸ Wanstall, *op. cit.*, pages 8 and 9.

4. TYPES OF COOPERATION. Two definite trends have marked cooperative effort among farmers in the last 30 years: (1) Marketing associations have been declining in numbers and per cent of total cooperatives, although volume of business has increased; whereas (2) purchasing cooperatives have been increasing in numbers. In 1913, 96 per cent were marketing cooperatives; in 1943-44 only 73 per cent were so classified. In 1915 ninety-one per cent of all cooperative members were members of marketing cooperatives; in 1943-44 almost 36 per cent were members of purchasing cooperatives. The purchasing cooperatives did only 2 per cent of the total business done in 1915; in 1943-44 they were doing about 14 per cent.¹⁹

The types of farmer cooperatives, ranked according to the amount of business done in 1943-44, were dairy products (23.3%); grain, dry beans and rice (22.8%); livestock (14.5%); purchasing (14%); fruits and vegetables (12.4%); poultry and products (3.8%); cotton and products (3.7%); nuts (3.1%); all other including tobacco, wool and mohair (2.3%).²⁰ Many of these cooperatives also provide a wide variety of services which range all the way from manufacturing to farm management. These services include grading, trucking, financing, advertising, testing, orchard management, pest control, protection against frost, and providing sales space for farm products in towns. A single association often combines one or more of these services with its marketing functions; approximately three-fourths of the marketing associations perform more than one service.²¹

Organizational types of cooperatives include: (1) the local associations, which are usually small, limiting their activities to one commodity; (2) the federations, which are unions of locals to gain greater efficiency and eliminate competition; (3) the large-scale centralized associations which unite all growers of a region into a single organization; (4) the large-scale national or regional terminal associations or sales agencies, both centralized and federated

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, page 3.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, page 10, table 5.

²¹ Hyre, *op. cit.*, page 7.

which endeavor to meet the competition of commission firms at central markets and return dividends to members; (5) bargaining associations, primarily in the form of fluid milk associations operating in the areas of large city milk sheds to bargain directly with distributors;²² and (6) the service associations which provide for processing plants, warehouses, insurance, generation and distribution of electricity, construction and operation of telephone lines, provision of credit, medical service, and similar services.

5. THE CHANGING EMPHASIS IN COOPERATIVE ORGANIZATION. In general, cooperatives among farmers have changed from emphasis upon buying farm supplies and household goods to selling farm products and recently to buying goods needed in the process of production. Producer cooperatives still do the majority of the cooperative business, though purchasing and service cooperatives have been increasing rapidly in numbers. Cooperation is not limited to the economic field. The social service organizations are becoming more and more numerous. Cooperative hospital associations are spreading and there are some cooperatives which hire doctors to help their members keep in good health. A cooperative recreation service has been developed in Ohio and has gained national renown.²³ Cooperative burial societies are increasing in number. Thus, in many fields, cooperation has become a means of improving not only the economic but the educational, the recreational, and the social welfare of its members and often the communities in which they live.

Most cooperatives are now federated; for a time the trend was toward centralized cooperatives, but recent trends have been away from too much centralization. Many cooperatives now operate on a regional rather than on a community basis in order to secure volume of business. Cooperative organization has thus become selective—the individual member in such a situation usually looks upon the cooperative from the standpoint of what economic advan-

²² See R. W. Bartlett, "Fluid Milk Marketing." Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1931, page 161.

²³ Benson Y. Landis, "A Cooperative Economy." New York: Association Press, 1943, page 13.

tages it can offer him in comparison with opportunities to buy or sell in non-cooperative channels. Regionalization thus sacrifices the opportunity to give the member the feeling of proprietorship in and responsibility for the cooperative which was given in the local community.

Principles of Operation

The three principles generally recognized as distinguishing a cooperative from other forms of economic endeavor are (1) democratic control, (2) limited returns on capital, and (3) sharing the benefits and savings in direct proportion to patronage. These were the principles guiding the pioneer Rochdale weavers in their first cooperative in England and which formed the foundation for the English consumer cooperative movement. Other principles include (1) unlimited membership, (2) voluntary membership acquisition, (3) business done for cash, (4) use of part of savings for educational purposes in the field of cooperation, (5) political and religious neutrality, (6) expansion as needed and desired to unite with other societies, produce what members need, and secure access to raw materials.

1. THE MANAGEMENT AND THE MEMBERSHIP. "Farmer cooperatives are the tool which has afforded farmers the effective means of placing and keeping their basic industry in balance with other economic segments of society."²⁴ Much of their success has depended upon the nature of management-member relations. "Many farm organizations have ceased to operate because of poor management. . . . To be successful and to serve its members effectively, a cooperative . . . must establish and conduct its operations so as to provide a realistic, practical service attuned to the service of its members."²⁵ Some of the most important policies include:

a. *Organization based on recognized need.* "Cooperative management must recognize the importance of rendering only those services it can perform efficiently and at a saving to its members."²⁶

²⁴ Brinkley, *op. cit.*, page 1.

²⁵ Raymond W. Miller, "Cooperative Policy and Management." Philadelphia: American Institute of Cooperation, 1946.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, page 2. This and the following points are from Miller.

b. *Major interest of leadership should be in the success of the venture.* This means that not only must there be a careful job done in forming the organization, making use of reliable and sympathetic legal talent, but provision should be made for possible changes including consolidation with other cooperatives if this is in the best interest of the venture, no matter what may be the feelings of the managers.

c. *The family unit must be recognized.* Cooperatives are of value to all members of the family; therefore membership meetings should always include the man, his wife, and their adult children. Many women thus become "believers" in the movement and most loyal supporters of cooperative endeavor.²⁷

d. *Membership carries with it an obligation.* Management must make every effort to secure full support by members—not accept as members people who do not intend to patronize the organization.

e. *Directors should represent the members in deed and in fact.* All activities of directors, including decisions to accept remuneration for personal services, should be approved and be open to scrutiny by the members.

f. *The best manager must be selected.* He should be paid as well as he would be in a similar position in any other concern. He should be a man with a successful record, capable of being given freedom to run the business based upon the policies set by the directors and the members; but he should not make policies.

g. *Policies should be developed after careful study.* The best procedure seems to be to refer proposed policies to standing or special committee for study and recommendation.

Other matters of concern to best management are: meeting the business world on equal terms; securing wide contacts; keeping members informed; providing prompt returns to members, keeping grades based on merit and truth, cooperating with other agencies, seeking help of churches, making full use of developing educational and service agencies, and an effective program of public relations.

²⁷ See W. A. Anderson, "Farm Women and the Services of a Farmers' Cooperative." Cornell Exp. Sta. Mim. Bull. No. 17, 1945.

2. METHODS OF CONTROL.

a. The one-man-one-vote principle, that capital should be protected but have a limited return, and that patrons be privileged to participate in profits in proportion to patronage, were the basic principles underlying the Rochdale movement. They have become world-wide in their application to cooperation.²⁸

The principle of democratic control is not universally used in cooperative organization. The exercise of the principle is based upon equal voice by all members irrespective of the number of shares of stock held in the cooperative; it presupposes, also, that every member can and will vote on all matters of policy. In practice by no means all of the members in many cooperatives vote on all, or even on the most important issues. Some cooperatives operate over an area so large that it is difficult to keep the average member well enough informed for him to vote intelligently. However, about 86 per cent of the agricultural cooperatives in the United States operate on the one-man-one-vote principle.²⁹

b. A few cooperatives (14%) used other methods of control than the one-man-one-vote method. It may be charged that these are not true cooperatives. However, when additional votes are allowed for shares of stock or patronage, a limitation is frequently put on the number per member to prevent control by one man or a few individuals.

c. A variation of the stock-share-vote method, using the principle of representative-democratic control, is the one used by the cooperatives developed through and with the help of the Farm Bureau in Illinois. The cooperatives affiliated with the farm bureaus and the Illinois Agricultural Association, either directly or indirectly, vote by shares—one vote per share. Yet the system is so organized that the control of the cooperatives rests with the farmers' organizations themselves, that is, either the board of directors of the

²⁸ J. P. Warbasse, "Cooperative Democracy." New York: Harper and Brothers, 1936, pages 14-16. See also Landis, *op. cit.*, page 5; Helen Topping, "Introducing Kagawa." Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1935, page 19; Edgar Schmiedeler, "Consumers Cooperatives." New York: Pilgrim Press, 1937, pages 18-20.

²⁹ Hyre, *op. cit.*, page 11 and table 5.

Illinois Agricultural Association or the county farm bureaus. The directors and officers of these associations, in exercising their control, are really acting as agents and representatives of the association or the farm bureau.³⁰

3. OPEN MEMBERSHIP. Most cooperative leaders take pride in the fact that membership in the cooperative is open to anyone who wishes to join and who may benefit from the cooperative. By their very nature farmers' cooperatives are limited to farmer membership, and are of the greatest value to the relatively small farmer; larger farmers tend to take advantage of the special favors granted them by private profit business in deference to their size and influence. Only when cooperatives become significant in size do they become attractive to the general run of larger operators.³¹ The policy of maintaining open membership, is, therefore, of great significance insofar as it keeps the door open to the family-size farm operator.

Not all cooperatives have open membership. Membership in some of the Illinois Agricultural Association and local farm bureau subsidiary cooperatives is not open in the sense that anyone who chooses to may join; some of the subsidiaries require that those desiring to be members also have a membership in the farm bureau. Though patronage in the subsidiaries is solicited or accepted from non-members of farm bureaus, non-members get no patronage refunds, these going only to paid-up farm bureau members. Thus the principle of participation in earnings on the basis of patronage is not carried out to the letter as in some cooperatives. This type of cooperative is not exempt from taxation.

4. LIMITED RETURNS ON CAPITAL INVESTED. Almost all cooperatives now abide by the principle of limited returns on capital by limiting to 6 or 7 per cent the returns on any shares of stock held or sold; many are non-stock organizations. In some cooperatives the number of shares of stock one individual may hold is also

³⁰ Paul Mathias, Corporate Secretary, Illinois Agricultural Association, personal communication.

³¹ Quentin Reynolds, "Farmer Cooperative—A Tool With Which to Work." Washington: National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, Blue Book, 1946, page 2.

limited; this is to discourage concentration of capital ownership in too few hands.

5. **COOPERATIVES AS PACE SETTERS.** Adherence to the basic principle of service to their members and to the public has won for many cooperatives the distinction of pace setters: in improving the quality of farm products supplied to the public; in seeking higher and higher standards, better methods of marketing, and seeking to return to the producer who produces high quality the reward that such quality brings in the market; in seeking more efficient methods; in eliminating abuses and breaking up monopolies and often in furnishing keen competition for non-cooperative enterprises.³²

Increasing Selectivity of Economic Cooperatives

Cooperatives in the United States, although endeavoring to follow the well-known bona fide Rochdale principles, have, nevertheless, departed from them in notable instances. Most cooperatives are fairly well protected against being taken over by a few stockholders and thus virtually becoming individual corporations, that is, owned by one person or a few people, as happened to so many of the early farmers' cooperative elevators; yet farmers' cooperatives have leaned heavily toward becoming "business only" concerns. They have, therefore, tended to grow away from the member—"as long as the cooperative serves the economic interests of the member he need have no concern as to how it is done," is the attitude of some managers.

1. **THE NEED FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS.** At present the lack of interest on the part of the average member in the functioning of the cooperative is of real concern; leaders of cooperatives are endeavoring to bridge the gap left open when the cooperative became too big for the neighborhood or community by intensive educational campaigns. News organs, broadcasts, bulletins, annual meetings offering artificial inducements to members to attend, and even the holding of neighborhood and community meetings, are

³² Clinton P. Anderson, "Cooperatives and the Family Farm." Washington: National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, Proceedings, 1946, page 27.

becoming common usage. Yet the average member of the average county or regional cooperative has little, if any, concern for his cooperative except that it insure him as high, or higher, returns than he can get elsewhere. Too often he feels it really is not his cooperative; to him it's only another business organization ardently seeking his patronage. It is not difficult to understand, therefore, why cooperative membership has become selective, for in many cases farmers would rather patronize an independent concern run by a friend, relative, or neighbor than to become a member of an organization whose control lies in the county seat or in some nearby city.

2. **THE INEVITABILITY OF SELECTIVITY.** Effective cooperatives often cause competitors to narrow margins and improve service so that the advantage of belonging to the cooperative becomes gradually less and less. Hence many cooperatives stabilize with 25 to 50 per cent volume for the area. The very fact that other concerns are brought to great efficiency of service should make the cooperative leadership aware of its dangers to the kind of cooperative that ends its service with the business objective.

As the cooperative movement has grown in the United States its leaders have increasingly measured their success in bigness and have found much satisfaction in the fact that farmers' cooperatives in the United States lead the world in numbers of cooperatives, number of members and size of business. In their zeal for bigness they have lost the kind of coverage in the neighborhood and community that was so characteristic of the early cooperatives, and which characterizes the cooperatives particularly in Denmark and Sweden. The trend is still toward greater selectivity. This trend needs to be changed if farmer cooperatives are to mean more to the average farmer than a way to make more money by buying or selling through the cooperative.

Cooperation as a Means of Social Justice

Cooperation is becoming one way, not necessarily the only way, of solving buying and selling problems for farmers in the United States. National support has been given to the movement because

it has been in the interest of general welfare. The movement will find more widespread acceptance if it will seek to improve basic conditions affecting not only farmers but all consumers. For example, a program to improve nutritional standards has been suggested.³³ In such a program there is room for much producer-consumer cooperation.

It is important, on the other hand, that the farmer cooperative movement endeavor again to become a "folk" movement, that the leaders of the movement seek again the support of the masses in the rural communities, rather than to retire into becoming a selective service. Likewise, its leaders might consider seriously carrying into the movement a spiritual or religious motivation—church leaders are anxious to get back of the movement for they see in it great promise for social justice. They are keen to point to cooperative developments which have served to emancipate people from bondage.

Landis points out, for example, that cooperative institutions appeal to the moral sense of individuals. "They provide social arrangements that enable the best tendencies within us to flourish."³⁴ The best kind of cooperative provides for control by the people "from within and below." "The people can only control what they directly own. The cooperative system recognizes the importance of personal ownership of property. . . . It also provides for group ownership of property by the voluntary techniques of cooperative organization." By a combination of good business, community education in cooperative principles, purpose and procedures, a deep service motivation, and effective consumer-producer cooperation, there is some hope of finding in the cooperative movement one means of attaining a degree of economic democracy.

³³ H. E. Babcock, "Looking Forward With Cooperatives." Washington: National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, Proceedings, 1946, page 31.

³⁴ Landis, *op. cit.*, pages 170-173. See also M. M. Coady, "The Social Significance of the Cooperative Movement." Chicago: The Cooperative League, 1945.

Council Organization for Advancing Cooperation

The cooperative movement among farmers in the United States became so widespread and so important in many states that there developed a realization of the need for cooperation among cooperatives—a means of exchanging information and of dealing directly with problems of education and promotion. Hence councils developed, first on a state basis and later on a national basis.

1. STATE COUNCILS. The first steps to organize state councils came more than a quarter of a century ago. Of 29 formed at the time, 24 have been actively engaged since in serving agricultural cooperatives and agriculture in general; two have been reorganized, and three have ceased to function. Their chief concerns are (1) to promote and foster the welfare of farmers' cooperative associations, (2) to assist and encourage the organization of true farmers' cooperatives, (3) to gather and disseminate information on cooperative organization, (4) to sponsor and support constructive legislation relating to cooperation and to agriculture in general, and (5) to assist various types of groups in the promotion of educational methods relating to cooperatives. Councils were organized in Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming at the beginning of 1945.³⁵

2. NATIONAL ORGANIZATION. To keep in touch with matters of national scope the councils have become affiliated with national organizations of cooperatives: the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, the National Association of Cooperatives, and the Cooperative League of the U. S. A. In addition an American Institute of Cooperation has been formed.

a. *The National Council of Farmer Cooperatives.* When first organized in 1929, the National Council of Farmers' Cooperatives, which is a member of the international Federation of Agricultural

³⁵ Jane L. Scarce. "State Councils and Associations of Farmer Cooperatives." F. C. A., U. S. D. A., Washington, D. C., 1945.

Producers, used the name "The National Cooperative Council"; this was changed in 1940. Its purposes are to "(1) promote actively and persistently the interests of farmers' cooperatives, (2) impress on various government and other agencies the importance and potentialities of the cooperative movement in agriculture, (3) provide an avenue through which cooperatives may be quickly advised of current developments significant to them, and (4) serve as a forum or conference body through which better understanding and bonds of friendship may develop."⁸⁶ The Council had 107 direct and associate members embracing over 5,000 separately incorporated associations of farmers in 1946 with 2,500,000 members distributed in every state.

The work of the National Council is quite broad; it keeps in close touch with Congress when it is in session; confers frequently with government agencies and officials; meets from time to time with other farm organizations; testifies before congressional committees on issues of interest to farmers' cooperatives; conducts research studies on such matters as marketing, distribution, farm prices, price regulations, and subsidies; keeps member associations informed of important national developments; arranges conferences of cooperative representatives for the purpose of discussing and studying common problems; confers with educational, religious, civic, farm, and other groups interested in building a better rural America.

b. *The National Association of Cooperatives.* This group was organized in 1944; it was set up as a national coordinating agency of farmer cooperatives for handling legislative and educational matters. Its program and policies are similar to those of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives. The two national associations are cooperating in their efforts to assist and promote all farm cooperatives.⁸⁷

c. *The Cooperative League.* The national organization for consumer cooperatives, the Cooperative League, nevertheless has as members many farmers' cooperatives. It is a much older organiza-

⁸⁶ 1940 Blue Book, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, page 19.

⁸⁷ Scarce, *op. cit.*, page iv.

tion than the above mentioned two national groups, having been organized in 1916. It is a part of the International Cooperative Alliance. "By 1946 consumer co-ops with a membership of over 2,500,000 were doing business of one billion dollars a year."³⁸ Of the 14,957 associations, 1,353 were farm supply, 850 rural electric, and 9,099 credit unions of which a number operated in rural areas. "Indorsement of the cooperative movement and its objectives was given by an increasing number of organizations in the religious, labor, farmer, social and political fields."³⁹ Included with the consumer group are the Southern States Cooperatives, the Cooperative G. L. F. Exchange of Ithaca, New York, the Farm Bureau Cooperatives of Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan, and the American Farmers Mutual in Minnesota.

d. *The Farmers Equity Union.* To be counted among the important groups which has through the years worked steadily ahead in the cooperative field is the Farmers Equity Union. It is called by its leaders a national organization of farmers and consumers. It was first organized to promote cooperative marketing and buying among farmers; its chief objective at present is to unite the buying and selling power of a large number of farmers and consumers: to enable a grain farmer in Kansas, for example, to market his wheat at the Kansas City price, less the actual cost of handling, giving the farmer control of that wheat as long as it is being handled through farmer-owned and farmer-controlled cooperative handling machinery.⁴⁰

e. *The Jewish Agricultural Society.* Founded and maintained by funds derived from Baron De Hirsch foundations and the revolving funds which these endowments created, the Society has as its purpose to encourage and advance farming by Jews in the United States. Through a Department of Farm Settlement, the Society advises those who intend to take up farming as a livelihood

³⁸ Wallace J. Campbell, "Consumer Cooperatives in America." Chicago: The Cooperative League of the USA, 1946.

³⁹ "Developments in Consumers' Cooperative Movement in 1944." Washington: Gov't Printing Office, Bull. 821, 1945.

⁴⁰ Leroy Melton, "Plain Facts About Farmers in Action." Greenville, Illinois: The National Farmers Equity Union, 1945, pages 1-2.

and helps the qualified person to get the right farm at the right price and on the right terms. In the last ten years (ending 1945) over 10,000 people sought the Society's advice and it was responsible for the establishment of farms of almost 1,000 farms directly, many more indirectly.⁴¹

The Society's Farm Loan Department makes loans not usually obtainable elsewhere, based on human factors as well as tangible security. More than 15,000 loans have been made aggregating over \$10,000,000 to farmers in 40 states. A Department of Agricultural Education and Extension carry new teachings to Jewish farmers, conducts night schools, publishes an agricultural magazine, maintains a purchasing service for individual farmers and for cooperatives, and works with farm youth groups. The Farm Employment Department made approximately 20,000 job placements since 1908. The Department of Rural Sanitation promotes higher standards of sanitation in and about farm premises. Though not a cooperative agency in the strictest sense it serves many of the functions of various cooperatives and service agencies in the general field.

3. REGIONAL PURCHASING COOPERATIVES. Over 2,300,000 patrons are claimed by 18 regional purchasing cooperatives; 93.5 per cent of these patrons are farmers. Included are the Grange League Federation in New York; Southern States Cooperatives at Richmond; Eastern States Farmers' Exchange in New England; Ohio Farm Bureau Cooperative; The Consumers' Cooperative at Kansas City; The Indiana Farm Bureau Cooperative; The Illinois Farm Supply Company; Farmers' Union Central Exchange at St. Paul; The Fruit Growers Supply at Los Angeles; The Farmers' Cooperative Exchange at Raleigh, North Carolina; The Midland Cooperative Wholesale at Minneapolis; The MFH Milling Company at Springfield, Mo.; The Pacific Supply Cooperative at Walla Walla, Wash.; The Farm Bureau Services at Lansing, Mich.; The Pennsylvania Farm Bureau Cooperative; The Central Cooperative Wholesale at Superior, Wis.; The Consumers' Co-

⁴¹ "The Jewish Agricultural Society, Inc." New York: Annual Report of the Managing Director, 1945.

operatives Associated at Amarillo, Texas; and The Farmers' Union State Exchange at Omaha, Nebr. They deal in farm supplies, petroleum products, lumber, fertilizer, milling, groceries, household appliances, and many other consumer products.⁴²

Possibilities of Producer-Consumer Cooperative Cooperation

The consumer cooperative movement has not had the growth in the United States that the producer movement has; it is not comparable, moreover, with the development of the consumer movement in Europe. Nevertheless, consumer cooperatives render a wide range of economic services to people of all occupations in their capacity as buyers and users of goods and services. Insofar as the consumer cooperatives are concerned, there is no essential difference between the various occupational groups of the population. A farmer is, of course, a producer; so is a wage earner in industry. Their occupational problems may differ greatly; and so there may be differences within the groups of farmers, just as wage earners are divided into innumerable trades. But all of them have practically identical consumer ends. . . . Farmers' or producers' marketing cooperatives are different. They are farmers' selling associations. They are occupational organizations. Consumers' cooperatives are for all of the people, farmers and consumers. Many farmers are members of consumers coops.

1. EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT COOPERATION. There is no serious conflict between the producer and consumer cooperative movement in the United States. In the past one or the other of the two groups seemed chary about developing effective relationships with the other; this hesitancy was probably due partly to a fear that consumer cooperation would gain the ascendancy, superimpose an urban or consumer philosophy upon the producer movement, and thus change the emphasis from "better prices for producers' goods" to "more savings for consumers." This, it was felt, would result in depressing, rather than in advancing, producer or farm prices.

⁴² Joseph G. Knapp and Jane L. Scarce, "Handbook on Major Regional Farm Supply Purchasing Cooperatives." Washington: FCA, Mis. Rep. No. 110, Oct., 1947, pp. 1-43.

Producer-consumer cooperation has become a reality, however. In many communities committees of joint concern have set up to run dairy cooperatives, for example, bringing harmony between the consumers and producers; both share in the direction of affairs and in the profits. In such efforts the consumers have obtained better and cheaper milk; also, the producers have an assured market and an equal share in the savings. The greatest possible justice is secured for both sides, not by dictation from one or the other, but by straight-forward business relations, with the producers and the consumers on equal footing.

In some areas, however, the movement has been for consumer cooperatives to take over production. Producers live in fear of such action. There need be no fear of such action if emphasis is placed upon patron ownership and control. On the other hand producers groups have extended themselves into the consumer field. In Cincinnati, Ohio, and in Quincy and Peoria, Illinois, for example, the cooperatives distribute their own milk.⁴³

Farmer-owner grocery stores, on the other hand, began to spread rapidly at the end of 1946. Co-operative Producer and Consumer Family Foods, Inc., in New York is an offspring of the Grange League Federation; with 15 super-markets which did \$100,000 of business a week, 6 dairy and egg stores doing \$10,000 more, and some packing and freezing plants, the "P and C" are trying to "spruce up competition." Though the organization has no provision for consumer membership, similar cooperatives in Ohio will include consumer membership.⁴⁴

2. PRODUCER COOPERATIVES' VALUE TO CONSUMERS. There need not be direct cooperation between producers' and consumers' cooperatives in order to realize a value of both to consumers in general. Farmer cooperatives were originally formed to provide assistance to the independent small farmer who was forced to accept low prices for his products and pay high prices for articles needed

⁴³ Val C. Sherman, "Farmer Coops in Illinois." Washington: Farm Credit Administration, 1939.

⁴⁴ Robert Cruse McManus, "Will Farmer Own Chain Stores?" Philadelphia: The Farm Journal, Feb. 1947, pages 72-73.

in production and household use. The growing trend of economic concentration into large scale organization and the growing concentration of the control of industry is reaching into the agricultural field to a marked extent. As the producer cooperative movement is intensified it will increasingly meet this monopolistic threat; it is thus a "very healthy addition to the American economy."⁴⁵ Cooperatives are thus a boon to the consumer who is also interested in curbing monopoly control, for producer cooperatives may have as their main purpose to seek lower general prices rather than higher prices or price fixing.

3. EDUCATION FOR PRODUCER CONSUMER COOPERATION IN SCHOOLS. Wisconsin has recognized that cooperatives have become a powerful force in American life. "No boy or girl can be considered fully educated for intelligent citizenship unless he or she knows something about cooperatives."⁴⁶ Hence, a state-wide committee of the cooperatives of Wisconsin, the University of Wisconsin, and Columbia University with the support of the American Institute of Cooperation has put out one of the first teacher's guides to cooperatives in school and community.⁴⁷

Cooperation is essential to our democratic way; we need to educate for it through-out America.

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⁴⁵ "The Competition of Cooperation with Other Forms of Business Enterprise." Washington: Gov't Printing Office, First Interim Report from the Committee on Small Business, 1946, pages 39-43.

⁴⁶ "Cooperatives in School and Community." New York: Bureau of Pub., Teachers' Coll., Columbia Univ., 1947, foreword.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In what respects are cooperatives social organizations?
2. What characterized the development of cooperatives in Europe?
3. What influence did the European developments have on those in the United States? When did these changes take place?
4. What significant changes came in the type of cooperatives formed in the United States? When did these changes take place?
5. What were the significant legislative enactments affecting cooperative organization?
6. Discuss the extent of cooperation in the United States.
7. What are the various types of cooperatives in the order of their importance based on membership or numbers of groups?
8. What are the chief principles distinguishing cooperatives from other forms of economic endeavor? What types of control are used in the various cooperatives developed in the United States?
9. In what ways are producer and consumer cooperatives similar; in what important respects are they at variance?
10. What is the role of cooperation in our economic order? What do you think should be its role? How can this be achieved?

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Compare the forms of cooperative organization in this country with those in Europe. How do they compare in purposes, system of organization and business done? Wanstall, Howe.
2. Study the forms of organization of the producer and of the consumer cooperatives. How are they similar; how different? What are the possibilities of producer-consumer cooperation? Bakken and Schaars.
3. Make a study of the systems of control of producer cooperatives. To what extent are they democratically controlled? What insures the continued existence of the cooperative and prevents it from becoming a corporation? What means are used to keep the members sufficiently well informed that they can and do vote on issues intelligently? How is the selective influence overcome? Bakken & Schaars, Coady, Miller, Landis.

EXERCISE

Examine your own community to determine the types of cooperatives functioning on a local basis and the extent to which farmers take part in cooperatives which function in an area larger than the local community. Which is most effective in getting and keeping members and in serving their interests. To what extent do local farmers exercise control over the various cooperatives of which they are members? What are the principles guiding the operation of the cooperatives of which farmers in your community are members?

CHAPTER XVII

THE ORGANIZATION OF RURAL INSTITUTIONS

Certain rural institutions operate on an organizational basis—they have officers, a membership, and a program; many of them sponsor other related organizations. The rural church, for example, has its own organizational structure; it also is the sponsor of young people's, women's and men's church organizations. A study of rural organizations would not be complete without reference to these organizations of institutions. The farm family, the school, the church, the government all have forms of organization which merit special study.

The Organization of the Farm Family

The organizational structure of the farm family provides one of the most important groups in rural society.

1. THE FRAMEWORK AND INNER ORGANIZATION. The usual union of (1) husband and wife, (2) parents and their children, and (3) relation of both husband and wife, makes a group bound into one social unit by ties of "blood and biological or social kinship."¹ Within this framework the average farm family has an inner organization which has much to do with its success:

"Like any strongly built and disciplined group, the rural family has a head, who organizes and manages its work, takes care of the education, training, and future of its children, and guards its prestige and its welfare."² This means fatherly or motherly domination and subordination of an intimate and loyal sort, unlike the type of subordination shown in other types of domination and subordination. (The best kind of family will decide issues in family counsel.) The nature of farm life calls for a division of labor, those of each sex and age being given tasks most suitable to their abilities;

¹ P. Sorokin, C. C. Zimmerman and C. J. Galpin, "Systematic Source Book in Rural Sociology." Vol. II, page 4.

² *Op. cit.*, page 15.

and yet the members of the family work together in the same occupation. Thus family cooperation is constant, for the family works together in the home and on the farm, all members being concerned with their success or failure on it, while in doing so they are constantly thrown together: they live, "eat, drink, sleep, play and feast together, and . . . the incomes of all members (being the source) from which the expenses are covered."³

2. THE MAJOR FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY GROUP. The early American farm family was said to be patriarchal in organization. Today farm women work on an equality with their husbands, the most successful farm families being those in which farm management and home management has given over to family management.⁴ It is not enough to assume that the primary function of the farm family is to produce an income from the soil. Good farm family organization recognizes three major functions: (1) Preserving and protecting life, (2) perpetuating the race and caring for the sex life, and (3) providing for the development of personality, culture and social relationships.

3. "GREAT FAMILY" CHARACTERISTICS. Farm families are not organized simply as small parent-child groups; they have their out-family contacts, termed the Great Family. One cannot overestimate the importance of this larger group of relations by blood or law, which has an influence even to the third or fourth generations.⁵ The most apparent influence of the Great Family is through transmission of farm property from parent to child. Many farm young people have been, and continue to be, "set-up" in farming by their parents. Trade work activities are in greater evidence among the kin-groups. Sunday afternoon gatherings, family reunions, and celebrations of birthday anniversaries, or weddings occur more frequently among

³ *Ibid.*, page 16.

⁴ J. H. Kolb and Edmund de S. Brunner, "A Study of Rural Society." Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, page 37. See also Wilcox, Boss and Pond, "Relations of Variations in the Human Factor to Financial Returns in Farming," Bull. 288, Uni. of Minn. Agr. Exp. Sta., 1932, and W. W. Wilcox, and O. G. Lloyd, "The Human Factor in the Management of Indiana Farms," Bull. 369, Purdue Uni., Agr. Exp. Sta., 1932.

⁵ Kolb and Brunner, *op. cit.*, pages 39-42.

the kin-groups. The organization of this great family is usually of a loose nature structurally, but it exhibits a close-knit solidarity in many rural areas, a solidarity which many times has repulsed repeated attempts on the part of outside forces to bring about changes. The support by one member of a kin-group of an enterprise sponsored by some outsider may not necessarily mean that the entire kin-group will sanction the enterprise. Instead, should the turn of events be such that some member of the kin-group is injured by the enterprise, entire support may be withdrawn by all other members of the kin-group.

Recognition of the place the farm family and its Great Family occupies as a form of rural organization may mean the success of organizational ventures of other types; failure to recognize this may spell dismal failure. Usually members of the same family come from the same nationality groups; they are often of the same religious belief; they are usually loyal to their kind—family ties are often the strongest group ties there are. And yet the family organization may be a very poor avenue through which to inaugurate a program: The close-knit family ties may engender jealousies; one member may not hold another in sufficiently high esteem to influence his behavior; and sometimes the member chosen as a leader of an out-family group may not be regarded as a leader by members of the family itself.

Organizations of the Rural Church

As an organization, the rural church probably ranks next to the family in its influence upon rural life. It has been close to the people; the traditional country church has been a neighborhood group. Although there are notable exceptions, e.g., the Amish and Quakers, most rural churches now depend upon professional or paid leadership; many of these leaders have been "grown" by the church. It has developed and used as many local leaders as any organization in rural life. The rural church always has been a voluntary organization separate from the state and depending on its own resources. It has developed and naturally maintained a high moral standard—the highest of any rural organization.

1. **THE RURAL CHURCH IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.** Leaders interested in the advancement of rural life take cognizance of the rural church not only as an institution but also as a rural organization. The church in the open country has been and still is in many areas a neighborhood center—it clings to the distinction of being the chief neighborhood center in many open-country areas.⁶ It therefore lies close to the daily activities of the people; and where neighborhood churches are active they are the chief integrating forces in these neighborhoods—close to the area in which democratic processes are most effective. It is recognized that in many neighborhoods where the church was once strong unfortunately it is now poorly supported; many open-country churches are dying; a large number have ceased entirely to function and the church buildings in a number of cases have been disposed of in one way or another. If the church in urban areas is to be strong, rural and especially country churches must be kept strong.⁷

2. **THE ORGANIZATION OF THE RURAL CHURCH.** Church organizations in rural areas are not unlike those of any other rural organization. Fundamentally the organizational structure of the local church includes officers and membership; systems from church to church vary as to the making of policies and as to administration. An official board with a chairman, who is the pastor in some denominations, is usually the local controlling body which represents the congregation or church membership. In addition, many churches have various types of committees to carry on the various phases of the church program.

Organizations within, or sponsored by, the church are almost universal—in many churches the Sunday school elects its own superintendent and other officers. Women's societies with elected officers carry on social and money raising activities. Youth groups meeting Sunday evenings are organized in many churches; some organize or sponsor several youth groups, dividing them, for example, by age, sex, or by function. Men's brotherhoods are found

⁶ Harold Hoffsommer, "The Relation of the Church to Other Rural Organizations." *Social Forces*, Vol. 20, No. 2, Dec. 1941, page 227.

⁷ David E. Lindstrom, see especially the issues of *Cappers Farmer* for Oct., 1945 and Jan. 1947, as well as for Dec. 1945 and June 1946.

in many rural churches. These organizations require lay leadership in the planning of programs and the carrying on of activities; often expert coordination is called for if friction is not to develop between the various groups.

3. **THE CHURCH IN THE COMMUNITY.** In a rural community a single rural church may command much of the time and energy of organization-minded leaders. Church services are often held twice and thrice weekly; each separate group may have one or more meetings a week; and special all-church or single-group activities may be planned for one or more times a week. Thus a church in a community which does not look with favor upon out-of-church organization activities may deter its members from taking part either by filling their lives as full of church activities as possible or by actually placing a ban upon its members' participating in the activity in question.

The rural church is not an isolated unit in a neighborhood or community; it is part of the life of the community.⁸ It also has its organizational affiliation with its denomination and often with some interdenominational body. The separation of church and state in the United States and the guarantee of the right of freedom of worship has led to the development of a large number of denominations, each with its own organizational system.⁹ In the 1926 Religious Census, which is reported to be more reliable than the 1936 Religious Census, "213 denominations were reported, 155 of which were grouped into 23 families and 58 returned (classified) as separate denominations."¹⁰ By 1947 there were an estimated 251 denominations and sects. The denominations having the largest membership in rural areas in 1926 were (1) the Catholic, (2) Southern Baptist, (3) Methodist Episcopal, (4) Methodist Episcopal, South and North (which, having formed a union with the

⁸ David E. Lindstrom, "Rural Life and the Church." Champaign, Illinois: Garrard Press, 1946, Chapters II and VI. See also Rockwell C. Smith, "The Church in Our Town." Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1945, Chapters XIII, XIV, and XV.

⁹ Mark A. Dawber, "Rebuilding Rural America," page 75.

¹⁰ T. Lynn Smith, "The Sociology of Rural Life." New York: Harpers, page 90.

Methodist Protestant now forms the largest Protestant group), (5) the Lutheran, and (6) the Presbyterian churches. The development of so many denominations, each of which usually finds adequate support in the cities, has created acute over-churching problems in many rural areas. With declining birth rates and population in rural areas both church and Sunday school members have declined in numbers and in proportion to the total population in many areas.¹¹

4. CHANGES IN RURAL CHURCH ORGANIZATION. Rural church organizations are undergoing significant changes in the United States.

a. *Protestant action.* Among Protestant groups interdenominational cooperation has been developing to overcome some of the ill effects of denominational competition. National leadership in this movement is now being taken by the Town and Country Committee of the Home Missions Council, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and the International Council of Religious Education.¹²

Numerous plans for systematic organization have been proposed. For example, the Larger Parish Plan,¹³ providing that a group of churches in a large community serve the community with a diversified ministry, has been put into effect in many areas. In other areas different schemes have been developed: Allocation of a new community to one denomination; formation of an undenominational community church; and the development of a Federated Church. These and the larger parish plan have been tried and are working in many areas.¹⁴ A significant new development is the annual National Convocation of the Church in Town and Country.

¹¹ W. F. Kumlien, "Basic Trends of Social Change in South Dakota: viii Religious Organization," Bull. 348, Agr. Exp. Sta., Brookings, S. D., May, 1941.

¹² "A National Program for the Rural Church." New York: Home Missions Council, 1938.

¹³ See Mark Rich, "The Larger Parish." Ithaca: Bull. 408, N. Y. State College of Agriculture, Cornell University, May, 1939.

¹⁴ Ralph A. Felton, "Local Church Cooperation in Rural Communities." New York: Town and Country Department, Board of Home Missions, Congregational and Christian Churches.

A second national organization, the Christian Rural Fellowship, encourages anyone interested in advancing christian rural fellowship to join. It is a national organization with membership dues at \$1.00 for which members receive letters, bulletins and articles by noted men interested in rural life. Several state and denominational fellowships have become associated with the national fellowship.¹⁵

Various methods of interdenominational cooperation have developed in the various states. Illinois has a Town and Country Department of an Illinois Church Council, which assists the College of Agriculture in holding an annual rural pastor's short course and rural life conference, carries on studies of the church in rural life, and in other ways endeavors to stimulate church interest in rural life problems. Iowa and New York have state Christian Rural Fellowships. In some states, as in Wisconsin, rural leader schools are held. Thus church leaders in the Protestant church are being made aware of the stake of the church in agriculture and rural life.

b. *Catholic action.* Recognition of the importance of the rural church was taken by the Catholic leaders early in the period following World War I. The organization of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, as one outgrowth of the American Country Life Association, has given impetus to the movement to strengthen rural church work. The Conference has been responsible for the Manifesto on Rural Life,¹⁶ a publication setting forth the attitude of the Catholic church on vital rural problems, its purpose being to "state certain fundamental principles and policies without which it would be folly to essay a solution." These principles and policies are chiefly derived from Catholic philosophy as expressed in the social encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI. This publication definitely places as primary the concern for rural life:

¹⁵ See "The Christian Rural Fellowship Bulletin List." New York: Room 1201, 156 Fifth Ave., 1945.

¹⁶ "Manifesto on Rural Life." Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1939.

- It looks to the farm family as the primary source of population and the chief agency in the training and education of the child ;
- It declares in favor of farm family ownership in preference to tenancy ;
- It looks upon rural towns as the centers of the most important community life of the nation ;
- It urges the rural pastor to be so trained that he can help his people obtain the facilities of the agricultural colleges, experiment stations and government credit organizations ;
- It recognizes that the growth of the entire church is dependent in a special way on the growth and progress of the rural church ;
- It recognizes the importance of farmer's organizations, declaring that the foundations of genuine cooperation should be Christian.¹⁷

In addition to the national organization, the Catholic church has organized rural life departments in each diocese serving rural areas. The national organization holds a conference once a year, publishes a magazine and encourages rural life activities in each diocese.

5. THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE RURAL CHURCH. The church as a rural organization was at one time relatively dominant in rural society. With the development of modern means of communication, the growth of farmers organizations and cooperatives, many of which grew up as economic or educational organizations outside the church, and the development of numerous common and special interest groups in rural society, groups taking over special functions once performed by the church, such as social welfare, the church has lost some of its dominant position in rural society. Efforts to regain this lost prestige noted above include (1) a recognition by the church of the work of other organizations, (2) the development of denominational and interdenominational rural programs and

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pages 3-70.

(3) training leaders for service in the rural church in Seminaries and especially in short courses and summer schools. The church can and should play a vital role in rural life.¹⁸

The Organization of the Rural School

Established law prescribes how rural schools shall be organized, but laws are man-made and rural schools are directed by elected officials who are supposed to develop the best schools possible. At first the organization for the support of schools was simple; a group of people decided to have a school, taxed themselves for its support, elected their directors and hired a schoolmaster. In those times the school was a neighborhood institution—everybody in the locality was a part of that institution.¹⁹ The one-room elementary rural school district, in many areas is still a neighborhood institution—in these areas it is the basic unit in a complicated organization for handling public education.

1. LEVELS OF ORGANIZATION FOR SCHOOL PURPOSES. The organization for public education in rural areas now operates on three levels: for elementary, secondary, and in some communities for adult education. There usually is no one system of organization for these functions. The organization for education differs from state to state and almost from community to community. The most common form of organization in the Midwestern states is the one-room school district in open country areas, administered by a board of three school directors who either handle their own finances or look to a township treasurer for tax funds to support the school; town-centered two-or-more-room elementary schools, administered by a school board of three or five; and various types of high school districts, administered by school boards of five or more. In addition there are non-high school districts with elected administrative boards, unit districts taking care of grades one to twelve controlled by elected school boards, and special types of high school districts made possible through special legislation. Also, in states like

¹⁸ Lindstrom, *op. cit.*, page 201.

¹⁹ Kolb and Brunner, "A Study of Rural Society," *op. cit.*, page 433.

Illinois,²⁰ each county has an elected county superintendent of schools; and a state superintendent of public instruction who holds office as the result of a popular election.

With such a matrix of organization, public school reorganization, to increase the effectiveness of rural schools, and make them function as efficiently as possible, constantly are being made.²¹ Progress toward centralized or community unit school districts performing the whole elementary and secondary school function has been made in a number of states. In notable instances these schools have become the educational center for the adults as well as the youth.²² Some progress has been made, also, toward the establishment of a junior or people's college system which provides for specialization in the vocations and for more effective adult education than would otherwise be possible under the 8 or 12 grade system.

The most widely advocated system of modern organization for rural schools is the larger administrative district. Within such a district there will be at least one senior high school and one or more junior high schools, these caring for grades seven to twelve; also elementary attendance units for kindergarten and grades one to six inclusive. The boundaries of such a district are usually the same as for the larger town-country community; the junior high schools serve the smaller village or hamlet communities; and the elementary attendance units are often located so as to serve the

²⁰ In Illinois "Each congressional township is by law established as a school township. The business of these school townships is transacted by an elected board of three trustees. This board elects a township treasurer who is ex-officio clerk of the board. . . . The powers of these school township officials may be classified as follows: (1) the custody and disbursement of the township and district school funds, (2) the organization and reorganization of school districts in the county (on petition of the voters and subject to the provisions of the law), and (3) the control of school elections." From, "Some Aspects of School Administration in Illinois." Mim. Report No. 4, Aug., 1938, Illinois Legislative Council, Springfield.

²¹ Iman Elsie Schatzmann, "The Country School." Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1942, pages 167-193.

²² Eugene T. Stromberg, "The Influence of the Central Rural School on Community Organization." Ithaca: B. 699, Cornell Uni. Agr. Exp. Sta., 1938.

neighborhoods.²³ In some of the larger of such districts the junior college is made possible.

The programs offered by these schools include not only the study of language, the social studies, mathematics, the arts, agriculture, industrial arts, homemaking, business education, health education, recreation, conservation, and international understanding; but they offer such special services as health services, special education for handicapped children, vocational and personal guidance, adult education, community recreation, school-community libraries, and safe, convenient and free transportation.²⁴

2. ORGANIZATIONS SPONSORED BY THE SCHOOL. Many rural schools sponsor in-school, and some out-of-school organizations. The in-school organizations are usually made up of pupils interested in special educational functions or activities such as Future Farmers organizations, athletic, drama, music, art, literary and similar clubs. These in-school groups take time, most of which must be out-of-school hours, thus complicating the organizational picture in many rural communities. Where the activities of these groups are integrated with those of church groups and other voluntary organizations the problem is simplified.

Out-of-school groups among parents and adults such as community clubs, parent-teachers associations, and mothers' clubs can be found in an increasing number of rural school communities. Their chief concern is the work of the school, but many plan programs and activities of interest to the entire community. Where school systems are unified the adult organization sponsored by the school forms the chief organization for serving the common interests of all the people of the community.

The Organization for Extension Work

The major form of organized adult rural education in many parts of the United States is Extension work in Agriculture and

²³ George A. Works and Simon O. Lesser, "Rural America Today: Its Schools and Community Life." Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942, Chapter 3.

²⁴ D. E. Lindstrom, *et. al.*, "We Can Have Modern Schools in Illinois." Urbana: Univ. of Ill. Ext. Serv. in Agr. and Home Ec., RSE 106, 1947.

Home Economics. Reference has already been made to the origin and growth of Extension Work for farmers and homemakers in the United States. Brief mention here of the organizational structure will suffice.

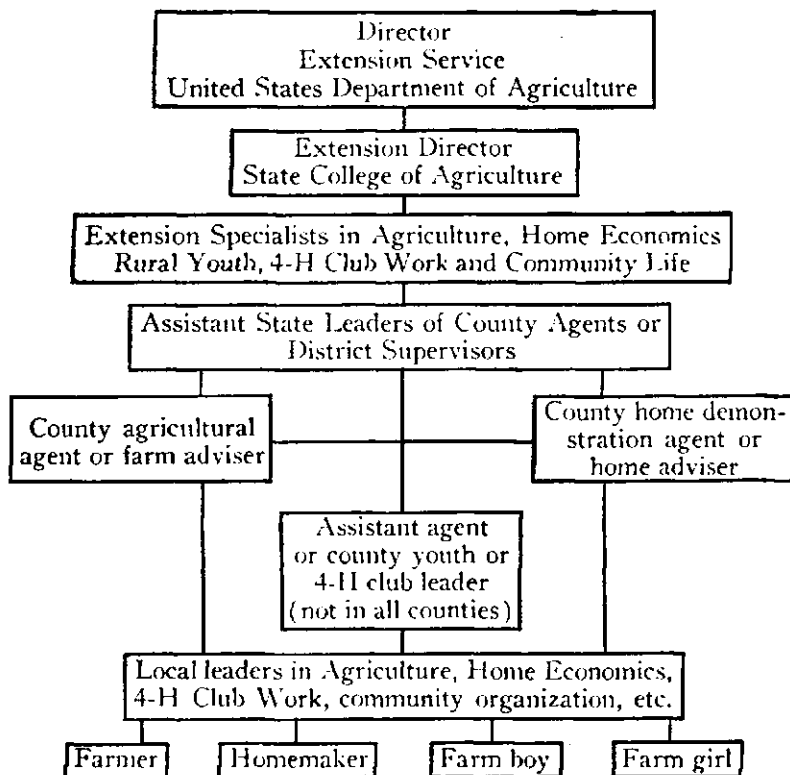
1. THE COUNTY AS THE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT. The pivotal point in Extension work is in the county;²⁵ each county in which Extension work is carried on has its county agent (one, at least, for agriculture and sometimes one for home economics, with some counties having a 4-H Club agent or youth assistant as well). These agents work through local voluntary leaders and in many cases local groups are organized in the communities. The agents are responsible to the state director of extension who answers to the national extension director. The chief function of extension agents is to teach farmers and homemakers improved practices in farming and homemaking and to advise rural people on methods of improving marketing, purchasing and rural community conditions. Extension specialists and supervisors are employed in the state and national offices to help local agents to plan their programs, develop or get the cooperation of local organizations and carry out a good teaching program.²⁶

2. PROBLEMS OF ADMINISTRATION. Modern day organizations and agencies have become so numerous that the average county agent's job has become much more than that of teaching improved practices. He must not only be well versed in organizational procedures, for he is called upon to advise with farmers' organizations, farmers' cooperatives and action agencies considered in previous chapters, but he is being called upon increasingly to coordinate the efforts of these agencies. A description of recent developments will illustrate the complexity of the task.

The agricultural planning activities of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, previously discussed, were designed to (1) secure ideas and opinions of leaders in neighborhoods and communities of

²⁵ Landis and Willard, "Rural Adult Education," page 69. See also C. B. Smith, "What Agricultural Extension Is." Washington: U. S. Department of Agriculture, 1945.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, page 71.

ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN**Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics**

problems which the Extension Service and various action agencies might help solve; and (2) to help carry the information on the solution of these problems, making use of the Extension Service as action agencies, to their neighbors.²⁷ These committees were representative on the county level of all agricultural, educational, and action agencies, having a majority of farm leaders on the committee.

With the pressure of food needs in connection with World War II, USDA War Boards were set up on which were placed

²⁷ See Carl Kraenzel and O. J. Parsons, "Agricultural Planning in its Economic and Social Aspects," Bull. 391, Agr. Exp. Sta., Mont. State College, June, 1941.

representatives of all governmental action agencies in the county. The War Boards were headed by county Agricultural Adjustment Administration chairmen, some of whom assumed more power and duties than was their due. In addition, a county victory garden committee, a county nutrition committee, and a county farm labor committee and other emergency groups were organized. The county agent had memberships in all of these, and major responsibility, so far as educational work was concerned, in most of them; thus he was in a veritable matrix of administrative machinery from which only the most astute found it possible to carry on an effective educational program.

3. THE PROBLEM OF COORDINATION IN THE COMMUNITY. With such a complexity of county organizations the task of coordination on the community level becomes more acute. Each county agency or organization has its local leadership, and its own group or clientele. In communities in which some system of community organization has been developed to cooperate with and carry on the county extension program, the problem is simplified. The leaders or workers in all the county activities carried to the community are, or can be, a part of the community organization. This may be a community council or a more informal arrangement of cooperation among the various social groups and organizations; or it may be a formally organized group which exists among farmers who are sympathetic with extension work. Lacking such the agents find it difficult, if not impossible, to secure cooperation in the community and very little if any extension work is done in that community.²⁸

What is ahead for the organization of education in rural areas? Will the situation become more complex? Or will efforts be made to simplify the system through study, intelligent planning, and the development of a single educational organization in a community, one that will take cognizance of the continuous need for education from the cradle to the grave? Doubtless the answer lies in the extent to which rural school organization, community organization

²⁸ See Hoffer and Gibson, "The Community Situation as it Affects Agricultural Extension Work," Spec. Bull. 312, Michigan State College Agr. Exp. Sta., Oct., 1941.

for Extension work and the work of voluntary organizations, including farmers' organizations, cooperatives and the rural church, can be coordinated.

The Organization of Rural Government

Two forms of organization characterize local government in rural America: the township and the county. The system of organization for local government is by no means uniform, however; reforms in rural government have proceeded more rapidly in some than in other areas so that the resulting system is anything but simple.²⁹ In Illinois, for example, most of the counties are organized on the township basis, each electing a supervisor to membership on the county board of supervisors; but in 17 counties a board of three county commissioners are elected to handle the county's business.

1. TOWNSHIP ORGANIZATION. The township is regarded as a last vestige of local self-government. In Indiana, with over 1,000 townships, the trustee is the chief administrative officer; he acts as both clerk and treasurer; he has charge of outdoor relief and the management of the township schools. A tax assessor, justice of the peace and constable are elected. These officials are aided by an advisory board of three and a board of finance of three.³⁰

The township is regarded by many students of government as an outmoded form of government. It is weak as a form of representative government, for about the only direct contact of the township officials with the people is the day-to-day informal contacts; when elected the officials are expected to carry out their duties without formal contact. The only form of truly local self government is the New England town which calls for regular town meetings of the citizens where issues can be presented to the voters and discussed. Town meetings in midwestern townships are provided for, but few of the voters attend because the matters brought up for discussion

²⁹ J. A. Fairlie and C. M. Kneier, "County Government and Administration." New York: D. Appleton Century Co., 1930.

³⁰ W. E. Cole and H. P. Crowe, "Recent Trends in Rural Planning." New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1937, page 508.

and action are of very little concern to them and little is done to appaise them of the need for attendance.³¹

2. COUNTY ORGANIZATION. In county government the board of supervisors or county commissioners are chiefly responsible for developing and carrying on county services. They are elected and therefore must "wait on the public" no matter how much this may impair the efficient functioning of county government. Other elected county officials include the judge, the sheriff, the superintendent of schools, clerk, and treasurer. Since these officials are elected there is no assurance of continuity in office, nor is there assurance that any will be qualified for their tasks upon being elected.

The Topsy-like growth of local government has led to a complex, confused, and uncoordinated system of organization in the county. In Blue Earth County, Minnesota, for example, there are at least 298 governmental organizations: 155 local; 105 agencies of the state; and 38 or more representatives of federal agencies. They are represented by 2 cities, 7 villages, 23 townships, 123 school districts, and 143 state and federal agencies. The elected officials number 680, the appointed 487, and other temporary employees, 363.³²

3. ORGANIZATION FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES. Political organizations operate in rural areas as a complement to the system of local government. The system of organization for any party is so designed as to select and to endeavor to elect to local and county offices those candidates pleasing to the party. Precinct chairmen and committeemen are elected in each party to seek out the candidates willing to run for office—candidates who will not only be best fitted for the job, that is, likely to attract votes, but also who will endeavor through patronage and other means to bring the party's

³¹ H. K. Allen, "Control of Expenditures in the Local Governmental Units of Illinois." Urbana: Vol. 37, No. 48, Uni. of Ill. Bulletin, Bur. of Bus. Res., Bull. Series No. 61, July 23, 1940.

³² "A Progress Report of the Blue Earth County Experiment." Mankato, Minnesota: Council on Intergovernmental Relations, 1945. See also "A Progress Report of the Henry County Demonstration." New Castle, Indiana: Council on Intergovernmental Relations, 1946.

candidates into office, and, therefore, the party in power. The method of selection of candidates for office in a rural area was at one time purely democratic. In the New England town, the town officials are elected at the annual town meeting.⁸³ In areas where the process of representative democracy is supposed to operate, the party's present chairmen are elected by members of the party. They in turn select the party's candidates for office. Any person can become a candidate, however, by securing a petition signed by a certain number of voters and filing his petition before a certain date. No system is provided, however, for the general group of voters to nominate candidates directly.

4. THE NATURE OF NEEDED REFORM. The dual organization of political parties and elected governmental officials makes a cumbersome and often inefficient form of local government. With added governmental duties developing, especially from Federal sources, as indicated in a previous chapter, the problem of effective local rural government becomes complicated. What can be done to preserve the democratic ideal and secure the greatest efficiency in government becomes a major problem.

The reorganization of local government must of necessity take place slowly. Sound principles of reorganization should be observed. Many counties are too small for the maximum efficiency of local government. Some reorganization of counties to have a smaller number is desirable. If townships and road districts were abolished and their functions transferred to the county, it would be greatly desirable to reduce the number of elected county officials. County government should be organized on a functional basis with a number of departments such as finance, highways, law enforcement, justice, etc. The heads of these departments should be appointed by the County Board from a list of candidates certified by the appropriate state agency. All of the functions at the county level pertaining to a particular activity should then be assigned to the appropriate department. The county departments would then be loosely integrated with state departments engaged in the same

⁸³ Cole and Crowe, *op. cit.*, page 503.

or similar activities. There should be adopted a modern system of accounting, budgeting, auditing, and reporting.³⁴

5. THE PROCESS OF GETTING ACTION ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL REFORM. Rural people in general look upon any move to reorganize local government as a move in the direction of centralization of government. Even so, this process has gone on apace until for many functions the local community area in rural life has no voice in administration (such as in the administration of some social welfare programs) and the county has become an administrative unit rather than a "sovereign authority for service" which is local in its control.³⁵ Many farm people would look with deep concern on removing local control of "banking, merchandising, manufacturing, school and church policies, farm, business and professional organizations, and crop production" which seems to be taken over to some degree "by state, regional and national agencies." Although "the county is destined to play the role of a practical administrative unit for non-local governmental services in a representative democracy" and although it doubtless is "the smallest unit which is administratively practicable," yet few farmers will concede that even the county is small enough a unit to provide for "active interest, support and participation" by the average citizen in the making of policies guiding the organization. Since "popular interest in the operation of county government is almost non-existent" it follows that some form of local unit, such as the New England town, as a unit in which the mass of citizens may discuss major governmental policies, should be employed and nurtured.³⁶

Councils on intergovernmental relations in three widely separated counties in the United States have demonstrated that a frontal attack can be made on the problem. These committees, made up of local officials and citizens, are finding that they can assess the operation of local government as well as work for its improve-

³⁴ Allen, *op. cit.*

³⁵ Carl F. Reuss, "County Government in Washington." Pullman: Washington Agr. Exp. Sta. Bull. No. 400, May, 1941.

³⁶ Quotations from Reuss, *op. cit.*

ment. If it can be done in these three counties it can and should be done in many other counties of the United States. This will be a major step in the preservation and strengthening of local government in this country.

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What types of organized institutions are active in your community? What functions are performed by them?
2. Discuss the organization of farm families you know best: how are family problems usually solved; how is the family work divided; how do members take part in the results of their labor? What are major functions of good farm family organization?
3. What are the functions of the Great Family of families you know best? What effect does this family group have on other organizational activities?
4. What are the chief forms of organization for the churches you know best? To what extent are these church organizations self-governing?
5. To what extent are the churches you are acquainted with neighborhood churches?
6. What kinds of organizations are sponsored by the churches you know best? What are the usual functions of church-sponsored organizations?
7. What types of affiliation are maintained by rural churches which you know best? What do these overhead organizations do for the rural churches?
8. What activities are carried on by Protestant organizations to improve rural church conditions?
9. What position has the Catholic church taken toward various rural problems?
10. What forms of legal rural school organization have been formed in the United States? How do you think the system can be simplified?
11. What kinds of organizations are usually sponsored by rural schools? To what extent are these integrated with other types of organized endeavor in your community?

12. What is the organizational pattern for Extension work? How is it organized to reach the people of the rural community?
13. In what ways has the task of the county agent become complicated? How can a system of organization be worked out to make the services of the county agent more effective?
14. What is the relation of the system of government to the political system of organization in rural areas?
15. What can be done to preserve "home rule"?

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. What is an institution? Why are churches, schools, and local government called rural institutions? Sorokin, Zimmerman and Galpin, Source Book II, Kolb and Brunner.
2. Compare the organizational structure and function of the early American farm family with those of today. Kolb and Brunner, Williams "Our Rural Heritage" and "The Expansion of Rural Life."
3. What relation does the modern rural church have to other organizations in the community? Hoffsommer.
4. What type of rural church federation or reorganization can be carried on? Dawber, Rich and Felton.
5. What should be the role of the church in rural life? Lindstrom.
6. How can centralized schools function to provide for continuous education or education on the three levels: elementary, secondary and adult? Stromberg. Outline the progress of reorganizing rural schools as described by Schatzmann, pages 146-152. What is a desirable system of organization? Works and Lesser; Lindstrom.
7. What is the role of planning in Extension work? Kraenzel and Parsons. What are the problems of making Extension effective in the community? Hoffer and Gibson.
8. What principles should guide reorganization of rural government so as to provide efficiency and retain local control? Reuss; Indiana County Report.

EXERCISE

Locate on your community map the families which have kin-relations with other families and the location of rural churches and schools. List and analyze (See Chapter 2) the family, church, school, Extension Service and local government and political organization. In what ways, if any, are the programs of these organizations integrated or correlated? To what extent do they cooperate with other organizations of the community?

CHAPTER XVIII

FARMERS' COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND AMERICAN COUNTRY LIFE MOVEMENTS

We have seen the rise and spread of various kinds of farmers' organizations in the United States, most of which have been rooted in groups organized on the community or neighborhood basis. Not all of these local groups have become a part of a national organization; a significant number and variety are purely local in nature and are of value and importance to the people in the localities in which they are active. Their objectives and programs usually place stress on social problems and activities, that is, they do things together which they feel cannot be done so well individually, or things which otherwise would not be done. They are thus groups which give emphasis to the human or country life values. For want of a better name they are here referred to as farmers' community organizations, though both country and town people take part in many of the groups.

Closely related to the work of these country life groups, as well as to the work of some of the local groups affiliated with general farmers' organizations, are the various country life movements which have spread over the country in recent years. These, too, place their emphasis upon the human and social values in rural life: values to be found in good homes, churches, schools, government, rural community organizations, etc. Though there are few direct organic relationships between these movements and the rural life groups in many rural communities, yet many leaders of the local groups have found their inspiration and direction from the national movements, carrying the knowledge and training gained in the larger movements into group life in the community and neighborhood.

Farmers' Community Organizations

As has been indicated, organizations for farm people active in the community may be (1) local units of groups having county, state and national systems, or (2) independent local groups, that is,

having no formal or organic relationship to an overhead or service system.

It has been shown before that Granges and Farmers' unions, for example, are organized with local units. Some Farm Bureaus and farm cooperatives use the county or some larger area as the local unit; others operate through local units having officers and regular meetings, carrying out a program of activities and projects. The work of these local units has already been described.

The independent type of local farmers' organizations usually operates in a manner similar to the local units of general farmers' organizations, except that each makes out its own program of activities and projects. The local independent organizations often operate without benefit of the help of service agencies. They are more numerous in some areas than the affiliated types. Many of them are neighborhood groups; in these almost every farm family in the locality belongs. A description of the system of organization and method of functioning of these local independent groups, is valuable, therefore, in a study of farmers' and rural organizations.

1. DIRECT VERSUS INDIRECT ORGANIZATION. The distinguishing characteristic of local independent farmer organizations, such as farmer's clubs or community clubs, is that they provide direct or personal contact among the families of the locality. Membership usually is open to any family; the group usually operates in a small rural community, that is, in the open country or in a community with a small village center. This is in contrast to the indirect type of organization: the type which operates in the community through a representative, the membership belonging to a larger county or state group as is true of many county Farm Bureaus in Illinois; or the community council made up of representatives of different groups in the larger village or town-centered community. "In the direct type of organization, all citizens are members to the extent that they participate in it. It is the old New England town meeting idea for an unofficial organization of the community."¹

¹ Dwight Sanderson, and R. A. Polson, "Rural Community Organization." New York: Wiley, 1939, page 153.

a. *Farmers' clubs.* It will be recalled that Periam discussed Farmers' Clubs of old England and described in some detail the work of Farmers' Clubs in the Mid-west immediately previous to and following the Civil War.² These types of organizations did not disappear with the development of the general farmers' organizations and the cooperatives; rather they persisted and many are still active in various parts of the country.

A special study of specific farmers' family clubs was made in Wisconsin, results of which were published in 1916.³ The Shilbot Creek Farmers' Club, for example, was then ten years old, had a membership of 75 men, women and young people, and held meetings twice a month. Its programs were planned in a general way once a year, consisting of entertainments, talks, and discussions, and it took active interest in schools, roads, telephones, fairs and hospitals.⁴

A later study of all rural organizations in five Wisconsin counties in 1926 showed 46 farmers clubs, 13.1 per cent of the total. Illustrative of these clubs was the Barcelona Farmers Club which was organized in 1915, at first starting out to be a buying and selling organization with men only as members, but later including women as members, making programs more varied and more educational. Its projects included adapting the school to community meeting uses, responding to War-time needs, encouraging testing of dairy cows, fruit growing, improving civic conditions, and planning recreational and cultural activities.⁵ Many of these or similar types of groups are still active. For example, an inventory of all rural groups in which farm people took part in 592 localities in 96 counties in Illinois made in 1940 showed 20 active farmers' clubs, 90 community units, 332 community clubs, and 347 farm bureau units. The farmers' clubs seemed to be concentrated in a few

² Jonathan Periam, "The Groundswell," *op. cit.*

³ C. J. Galpin, and D. W. Sawtelle, "Rural Clubs in Wisconsin." Madison: Bull. 271, Agr. Exp. Sta., University of Wisconsin, 1916.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pages 11-12.

⁵ J. H. Kolb, and A. F. Wileden, "Special Interest Groups in Rural Society." Madison: Res. Bull. 84, Agr. Exp. Sta., University of Wisconsin, 1927, pages 80-81.

counties; in others the other forms had come in to take their place;⁶ of functioning.

b. *Community clubs.* Independent groups providing educational and social activities for farm families are frequently called community clubs; some do take in more than farmers, for when active in or near a village, they draw membership from among villagers as well. In the Wisconsin study, 12 per cent of 351 organizations were listed as community clubs in 1926. Twenty-one per cent of 234 rural groups studied in Illinois in 1930 were called community clubs; they were sometimes called school clubs because they held meetings in one-room school buildings.⁷ In 1940 community clubs made up 21 per cent of the total number of local educational groups in which farm people participated.

The major purpose of most community clubs is to provide social and recreational facilities within the community, some had as their principal object the improvement of agricultural practices. Most of the clubs have from 30 to 50 members. The ones which seem to be the most successful have carefully planned programs and carry on projects related to the needs of the people of the community.⁸ Programs are usually social and educational in nature. Projects carried on by the various clubs include school activities, buying and selling, health projects, 4-H club activities, parties, picnics, and festivals.⁹

An indication of the possible significance of community club activities is shown by the results of their work at Northfield, Minnesota. Clubs there started by Dr. A. M. Field, head of agricultural education at the University of Minnesota, when he was teacher at Northfield (about 1908 to 1912), a large group of them, persisted for a long time. The Rice county Farm Bureau grew out

⁶A Study of Rural Organizations, in manuscript, Agr. Exp. Sta., University of Illinois.

but they were virtually the same as farmers' clubs in their manner

⁷D. E. Lindstrom, "Local Group Organization Among Illinois Farm People." Urbana: Bull. 392, University of Illinois Agr. Exp. Sta., 1933.

⁸J. Wheeler Barger, "The Rural Community Club in Montana." Bozeman: Bull. 224, Uni. of Mont. Agr. Exp. Sta., 1930.

⁹D. E. Lindstrom, "Common and Special Interest Groups in Rural Society." In ms. Uni. of Ill. Agr. Exp. Sta., 1947.

of them and many of them were retained as the local units of the county organization. These clubs, also, were the nucleus of the Twin City Milk Producers Association, one of the largest farm cooperatives in the United States.

Parent-teacher associations in rural areas are similar to community clubs except that the primary object of these groups is to secure better cooperation between the school and the community. Those affiliated with the National Congress of Parents and Teachers are urged to have such committees as for publicity, membership, program, hospitality, budget, etc. Program helps are available from the state and national headquarters of the organization; they place primary emphasis upon the problems of the school as they relate to the community.

It is recognized that to organize a P. T. A. is often more difficult in a rural community than in a city; also that many rural communities already have organizations serving excellent purposes, "such as the Farm Bureau, the Farmers' Union, and the Grange. There are some who feel that these organizations can serve the purposes of a P. T. A.—that another organization is not necessary. Certainly it is desirable that such groups become interested in education and child welfare. These organizations, however, have other purposes; their chief interests lie elsewhere. Since the welfare of children and youth has an importance second to none, the rural community should have an organization that makes the promotion of child welfare its chief aim and that is composed of the parents and teachers of the children whose welfare is at stake."¹⁰

c. *Community councils with direct participation.* A number of organizations, some of which have been sponsored by extension services, have been a combination of direct organization and indirect organization. Direct contact is provided through community meetings; detailed work and study are carried on through committees representing the various organizations or interests of the community. The organization may be in the form of a community club and go by the name of "community club" and attract both

¹⁰ "The Rural Parent-Teacher Association." Chicago: The National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1945.

country and town people. In some cases, especially in hamlets or villages, the clubs are all-inclusive, that is, including farmers and townspeople and with every family in the community eligible for membership. In some of the larger places community clubs are somewhat like service clubs, such as Kiwanis or Rotary, in that they are made up of merchants and business men, including farmers.

Several experiments of planned direct-indirect community organization have been tried in various parts of the country, some with the help of extension services. Two which early received considerable attention were the West Virginia community councils and the Massachusetts-Missouri plan originated by Morgan and adapted to Missouri and later to Virginia by Hummel. A similar plan is fostered by Miss Mary Mims¹¹ in Louisiana. The communities are organized in the what are called parishes in the state, these corresponding to direct-type communities farther north. Plans are usually made for a series of community meetings with varied programs, one of which is a sort of annual meeting at which time the accomplishments for the year are reviewed and plans made for another year. Regular monthly programs helps are sent from the college which are worked out in considerable detail, providing recitations, material for discussion, and suggestions for entertainment and recreation. In addition special materials in recreation, called Fun for All Ages, are sent out at regular intervals.

The community council in West Virginia is but another name for a board of directors of the community organization. "The community council, elected each year at a special annual meeting (of all the people of the community) acts as a Board of Directors for the community. Council members are elected to represent the different interests in the life of the community. . . . Council members are responsible for (1) making plans and holding monthly community meetings; (2) selecting and presenting projects to the community for adoption, and supervising and directing activities leading to their achievement; (3) keeping in touch with and helping promote county, regional, and state programs, such as farm bureau,

¹¹ Mary Mims, "The Awakening Community." New York: Macmillan, 1932, Chap. IV-VII.

farm women's bureau, 4-H club, county school unit, county health unit, county council of religious education, regional production credit association, country life jubilees, etc.; and (4) promoting a spirit of cooperation and understanding between the homes, churches, schools, and other institutions or agencies that have as their purpose the achievement of the best physical, mental, social, moral, and spiritual growth and development of the community.¹²

The central feature of the work of the council is to score the community on the basis of a score card, developed by the Extension Service, emphasizing organization, community spirit, citizenship, health, homes, churches, schools, recreation, music, nature, farms, business and industry. "For twenty years the West Virginia Extension staff has been scoring rural communities, and, in that time they have scored some 350, one to fifteen times."¹³ "The council serves much the same purpose as the Farmers' Clubs, except that all members of the community are welcome and there are no individual memberships."¹⁴

The Standard Community Association, developed by Hummel, has as its object "to encourage a spirit of mutual helpfulness among all the people of the community and to carry on a program of work which will result in the adoption of improved farm practices and a continued development of home and community life."

The plan of organization is presented as a "type . . . which is quite adaptable to the need of any rural community. . . . It suggests the division of the work of the community into . . . departments, and the selection of separate committees, composed of those who are really capable and interested, to look after the development of each of these phases of community life." Committees are provided for in the plan on Agriculture, Homemaking, Educational Affairs, Civic Improvement and Social Life. The work of these committees

¹² A. H. Rapping, "Education Through Organized Community Activities." Ext. Serv. Cir. 307, W. Va. Coll. of Agr., 1934. Though Rapping has left the work in West Virginia, his method used to score communities is significant enough to be recorded here; an adaptation of the plan is possible in many rural communities.

¹³ Sanderson and Polson, *op. cit.*, 156.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, page 159.

is united into a single program through the joint action of the program and executive committees. "The general community meetings offer the means of presenting and keeping this unified program before the people."

The officers and committeemen are elected for one year. The three officers and the chairman of each of the five committees form the program and the executive committee. All persons over 14 years of age in the community who are sufficiently interested to come and take part have the privilege of voting.¹⁵

The plan, though simple, was complicated enough that in 1936, five years after active field supervision in Missouri had ceased, of 110 known to have been organized, only 26 were active.¹⁶ The two chief difficulties in maintaining the associations were "obtaining a satisfactory meeting place and finding and holding qualified leadership."¹⁷

In using the standard community association plan in Virginia, the scope of the standing committees has been broadened by adding committees on business, public welfare, health and religious life.

d. *Township or community unit organization.* Since the farm bureaus in some states have looked upon the county as the local unit, efforts have been made by educational leaders to form local organizations to cooperate with these county organizations and with the extension service. In Iowa, for example, the local groups developed were called township farm bureaus, though many of them included all farmers interested. These township farm bureaus hold regular community meetings, some meeting twice a month. The plan includes working out yearly programs which when completed are called yearbooks.¹⁸ In arranging the yearly programs the township farm bureau officers call together a central committee of 5 to 8

¹⁵ B. L. Hummel, "Community Organization in Missouri." Columbia: Cir: 209, Uni. of Mo. Coll. of Agr. Ext. Service, 1928.

¹⁶ E. L. Morgan and Annabel Fountain Howard, "Community Organization in Missouri." Quoted in Sanderson and Polson, *op. cit.*, page 163.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, page 164.

¹⁸ W. H. Stacy, "Let's Have Profitable Meetings." Ames: RS-69, Iowa State Coll. Ext. Ser., 1947.

to meet with the county agent in a farm home. First attention is given to types of programs which have become successful annual events, such as 4-H club achievement days, school booster days, talent festivals, reports of state or national programs, etc. These committees check over program helps available in the program service plan of the Iowa Extension Service. The working out of details for each monthly program is done by a program committee. The Iowa Extension Service provides a score sheet for each township organization. Each organization scores itself on the basis of membership, leadership and program. Points are given for payment of dues, activity of officers, planning ahead on programs, and carrying on such projects as 4-H club or rural youth work. Superior organizations are those making 1,000 or more points; standard township farm bureau certificates are issued for those scoring 750 to 1,000 points.¹⁹

A pattern for rural community unit organization has been developed in Illinois which was based on a study of rural organizations in the state in 1930.²⁰ They were general purpose in character, the principal stimulus for their organization usually coming from members of farm and home bureaus, 4-H clubs and other local rural organizations. Encouragement in the organization of community units was often given by farm and home advisers and by the Agricultural Extension Service of the University of Illinois. The boundaries of the units are usually determined by members of farm and home bureaus indicating their choices for place of meeting; some, however, are organized on the township or precinct basis, but members from the natural community area come if interested, irrespective of civil boundary lines. Community units are not unlike farmers' clubs, community clubs, and similar groups, which are social and educational, and in the types of programs planned, which provided for business, education, recreation and sociability; but they serve larger areas and are more closely related to service agencies such as the Extension Service than farmers and community clubs. They do not restrict their membership as much as

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Lindstrom, *op. cit.*

do local granges, though the bulk of the membership in community units usually are farm or home bureau members.²¹

2. **INDIRECT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION.** Farmers have joined with townsmen in many communities to form councils in order to get things done of value to the people of the community. Some have been formal in nature and other quite informal; most have been made up of representatives of groups in the community, but others have not.

a. *Formal representative council organization.* The area in which councils operate have much to do with their system of organization. In relatively open country territory, for example, the council need not be elaborate in organization. It is not hard to secure representation of various interests in the community and to develop services which otherwise would not be developed. The Stony Creek Valley Community Association in Pennsylvania, for example, organized in 1930, has as its object to encourage a "spirit of mutual helpfulness and friendly cooperation among all the people . . . and to carry on a program of work which will result in the adoption of improved farm practice and a continued development of home and community life."²²

The Thompson, Ohio, Township Council illustrates, also, the representative council; it consists of the presiding officers of all organizations and agencies in the township, such as township board, school board, churches, farm bureaus, farmers institute, parent-teacher association, Future Farmers, and similar groups. Among the projects carried on are the provision of a free public library, townshipwide fire protection, and a year-round recreation program.²³

b. *Informal council organization.* An experimental effort at rural community self analysis was started in five Illinois communi-

²¹ D. E. Lindstrom, "Local Group Organization Among Illinois Farm People." Urbana: Bull. 392, Uni. of Ill. Agr. Exp. Sta., 1933.

²² Annual Report of the Stony Creek Valley Community Association, A. R. Knepper, President, R. No. 2, Berlin, Pa., 1945.

²³ C. S. Hunsinger, "Accomplishing Rural Community Work." National Township Council, Flat Rock, Ohio, 1938.

ties in 1945. It was sponsored by the Bloomington Daily Pantagraph, through its editor, H. Clay Tate, and the University of Illinois. The first step in the project was to ask each of the five communities to select half a dozen interested citizens to attend a general meeting in Bloomington at which time the plan of the survey was worked out. Then a general community meeting was called in each of the communities to place the plan before the people. The third step was the selection of a community council to be made up of representatives from every organization and interested group in the community. Out of this was selected an executive committee to serve as the driving force in each community. This committee was chosen by the community council.

From this point organization was needed to get the survey carried on. Three major committees, irrespective of organization, were chosen to study (1) industries, business, and personal services, (2) social facilities and services, and (3) civic affairs and public activities. These committees sent out simple questionnaires to the families in the community, both farmers and townspeople, the answers being the raw material for analysis and specific action later. Suggestions for improvement which came from the most people were made the basis for action; on some issues further study was required before action could be taken.

The action to be taken depended upon the nature of the suggestions. In one community store fronts were reported as unattractive; in a single year after the survey a remarkable change could be observed, the action being taken by the individual merchants themselves. In another community there was demand for a new locker plant; plans were soon underway to build one. In another school consolidation was recognized as being needed; a consolidated school was organized by the people of the town and country within a year. The council and the committees, built around a loose organization, stimulated the action; they did not take action; the organizations or agencies in best position to do something about it took action. The councils in the various communities might be called upon to take action in case no group in the community feels itself in position to undertake what the people think is needed; but for the most part

it seemed best in the present experiment to get things done through already organized groups.²⁴

c. *Functional non-representative council organization.* The organization of advisory councils for agricultural education in a community illustrates still another form of rural community council organization. "The advisory council is one device for saying to the community, 'This is your school and your agriculture department. You want to use it for the attainment of values which you think are important.'

"A common procedure in setting up the council is for the teacher of agriculture and the school administrator together to nominate men for the council. These nominations go before the board of education. Appointment comes directly from the board. . . . The council should be large enough to be representative of the community. Councils of seven to twelve meet this requirement.

"Council members are well distributed geographically. They do not come as representatives of community organizations, but men are chosen who are well regarded by and have contacts with people of all groups and factions: Methodists and Catholics, Farm Bureau and Farmers' Union members, owners and tenants, town and country dwellers, etc. There should be considerable range in the ages of council members so that all age-groups may have a hearing. Councils should not be made up exclusively of prosperous farmers; many who are making good use of their limited opportunities are better council members than the more affluent members.

"When an individual agrees to serve as a council member, he should understand what the job will take and that he assumes real responsibilities. Good council members only can be secured by this approach. Councils should meet six to twelve times a year if they are to be effective. Council members should be ready to serve on committees and to help in any way they can to forward the program they help to build."²⁵

²⁴ "My Community . . . Which Way?" Bloomington, Illinois: The Daily Pantagraph, Wed., Nov. 20, 1946.

²⁵ H. M. Hamlin, "The Community Program of Agricultural Education." Champaign, Illinois: Illini Union Book Store, 1943, pages 7-9.

Experiences with advisory councils by agricultural teachers show that their activities are not always limited to the work of the agricultural department in the school. In some instances they have become more than advisory councils; they have assumed the role of real community councils in communities in which no other such group is active. The principles of formation and functioning, also, of these advisory councils are applicable to the formation of any type of community council.

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION. The neighborhood and community group or organization are important; they form the foundation units upon which the most effective county, state and national programs for farmers' and rural organizations can be built. The neighborhood is the area for face-to-face contact and the area in which all families are included in whatever neighborhood programs are worked out. The village-centered community is the area in which farmers and townsmen can and do form common-interest groups. The rural community is the area for action, not only for farmers' organizations, but also for governmental agencies as well. Larger areas may be needed for administrative purposes; the most effective functional groups are found in the neighborhoods and the communities.

The Country Life Movement²⁶

The country life movement in America has had one basic objective all through its history: "To make rural living as effective and satisfying as that in any other civilization."²⁷ This objective was tacitly expressed in the earlier agricultural society, farmers' club and farmers' organization movements; but it was most clearly stated by the Theodore Roosevelt Country Life Commission. But concern for the quality of rural life came early in the history of the Republic, even being referred to in the works of the early agricultural societies. It was specifically expressed in the objectives for the founding of the Granger movement in giving women equality with

²⁶ This section has been taken from the author's book: "American Rural Life." New York: The Ronald Press, 1948.

²⁷ "Report of the Theodore Roosevelt Country Life Commission." Raleigh: University of North Carolina Press Reprint, 1944.

men in the organization of the Grange and in seeking to improve social as well as economic conditions of farmers.

1. THE COUNTRY LIFE COMMISSION. Reference already has been made to the Theodore Roosevelt Country Life Commission. Because of the growing concern for the lack of social and cultural advantages for farm people Theodore Roosevelt formed a commission made up of a number of outstanding students of rural life and charged it to hold hearings among rural people all over the nation so as to discover the deficiencies in rural life and their relation to the welfare of the whole of society. The results were four-fold: (1) to spur the organization of the national and state system of extension work; (2) to urge the development of a more effective system of rural education, stressing the need for vocational agriculture and home economics; (3) to stimulate the organization of state and national country life associations; and (4) to give stimulus to the scientific study of rural life. The movement did not end with the discharge of the commission. Immediately after World War I a new kind of national organization was formed.

2. THE AMERICAN COUNTRY LIFE ASSOCIATION. Early in the postwar period (in 1919) a conference was called to discuss the important rural life problems; many of the leaders who had taken part in the work of the Country Life Commission were active in this new movement. Out of the first two national meetings held there was formed the American Country Life Association which had for its objectives: "(1) to facilitate discussion of the problems and objectives in country life and the means of their solution and attainment; (2) to further the efforts and increase the efficiency of persons, agencies, and institutions engaged in this field; (3) to disseminate information calculated to promote better understanding of rural life; and (4) to aid in rural improvement."²⁸ These still are the objectives of the organization.

The association was not and did not pretend to be an action agency or to function as a policy-making group, or even one to

²⁸ "Proceedings of the First National Conference, Baltimore." Also, Proceedings of the American Country Life Conference, 1944." Lafayette, Indiana: Am. Country Life Ass'n, 1919 and 1945.

directly influence policies affecting rural people. Its functions are performed through: (1) annual conferences held in different parts of the country attended by many leaders of national groups interested in agriculture and rural life, and by people in the area in which conferences are held; (2) publication of proceedings which contain addresses and discussions at the conference; (3) to carry forward such other functions as seem to be feasible. For a number of years it published a house organ devoted to rural life affairs called *Rural America*. It also supported the organization of state and local country life conferences.

The Association is financed by membership dues; for a time grants were made by foundations to carry on the work. Its membership includes mostly national and state leaders, and organizations and agencies interested in the improvement of rural life; these have numbered not more than 1,000 in the more recent years of the life of the organization. Most of the national farmers' organizations hold membership in the Association.

3. SPECIALIZED COUNTRY LIFE MOVEMENTS. Mention has been made already of the Catholic Rural Life Conference; it had its beginnings in the early years of the American Country Life Association. Of equal significance is the Protestant Convocation of the Church in Town and Country sponsored by the Town and Country Committee of the Home Missions Council of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ of America and the International Council of Religious Education; the country life movement can now be said to include the rural work as well of the National Lutheran Council. These can be said to be a part of the American Country Life movement.

Closely related, also, is the work of the Rural Department of the National Education Association, of the Rural Life Association²⁹ Southern Rural Life Council, and of the state rural life conferences, such as those in Pennsylvania, Michigan, Mississippi, and Illinois. These, like the American Country Life Association, are conference or council groups, bringing representatives from a wide variety of

²⁹ Stanley Hamilton, secretary. A significant movement initiated by the Friends.

rural organizations and agencies together. Few of them are localized, even on the county basis.

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How are local independent organizations different from the affiliated types?
2. What are the chief characteristics of the direct community organization?
3. Describe the organization, program and activities of a typical farmers club.
4. In what ways are community clubs similar to and in what ways different from farmers' clubs? Compare the community club organization with that of a parent-teacher association.
5. What are the responsibilities of the committees in the West Virginia community councils? What is the central feature of the work of the council?
6. What is the object of the Standard Community Association? How was this to be accomplished?

7. How are township farm bureau meetings in Iowa planned? How is the work of each organization appraised?
8. What is the organizational plan for community units in Illinois? In what ways are they similar to farmers' and community clubs; how are they different?
9. Describe the makeup of the Thompson, Ohio, Township Council. What types of activities does it carry on?
10. What is the purpose of an advisory council? How are planning activities carried out?
11. Discuss the relative merits, as you see them, of the various types of rural community organizations (1) as democratic systems, (2) to provide for benefits of service agencies, (3) in reaching all farm or rural families.
12. Of what significance are the neighborhood or community groups in providing effective rural organization?
13. Discuss the nature and importance of country life movements.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Compare the organization, structure and the functions of farmers and community clubs as described by Barger, Periam, and Galpin.
2. Study the scoring systems for rural organizations developed by Rapping, Hummel and Stacy, noting their similarities and dis-similarities. What adaptations would you make in them if you were to develop your own scoring system?
3. Study the direct and indirect rural community organizations described by Sanderson and Polson. In what respects would the direct types be more effective in solving rural problems? The indirect?
4. Study the system of organization of community units in Illinois. In what ways would you say they meet the needs of farmers clubs? Of community councils? What are their chief deficiencies?
5. What are the principles on which a good advisory council can be formed? What can it do for the community? Hamlin.
6. Study the manner in which the various country life movements have affected the quality of rural life. Proceedings of the ACLA.

EXERCISE

Study your own community (or the one you have chosen for analysis) as to the activity of organizations discussed in this chapter. What kinds of groups are there now? Determine if there have been others active in the past. What are the chief activities of those now active? To what extent do they reach all of the people of the community? Are they regarded by the people as essential; or do they command only passing attention? Why? What types of programs and projects are carried on? What have been the outstanding accomplishments?

CHAPTER XIX

THE FARMER AND FEDERAL AGRICULTURAL AGENCIES

The farmer in the United States is affected by the work of federal agencies as never before in the history of the country. Most of these agencies depend upon a system of organization which brings local farmer leader participation into play. A brief review, therefore, of the systems of organization used to initiate and carry on the work of the several federal agencies is important, for it will show how great the dependence has been on the part of most of these agencies on the work of local leaders. It will show, also, the efforts made by these agencies to keep close to the thinking and base programs on the felt needs of the farmers themselves.

The Extension Service—County, State and National

Agricultural extension service, as it has developed in the United States, was organized with professional leadership on the national, state and county levels; it has always depended upon voluntary leadership in the communities and neighborhoods for extension further than the county unit. (See previous chapter for organizational aspects).

1. **PURPOSE.** The original purpose as stated in the Smith-Lever Act of Congress, is to "aid in the diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture and home economics and to encourage the application of the same."¹ At first the tendency was to adhere strictly to the improvement of farm and home practices. But as time went on the interpretation of the purpose has been broadened and deepened to include human and social objectives as well.²

¹ "Report of the Committee on the Scope of Extension's Educational Responsibility." Washington: U. S. Dept. of Agr. Extension Service, January, 1946.

² "What Agricultural Extension Is." Washington: U. S. Dept. of Agr. Extension Service, 1944.

2. **SCOPE OF THE WORK.** The major field of extension activity, as defined by a special committee for the USDA Extension Service, lies in seven distinct areas:

a. *Economic problems and public policies.* It is recognized that farmers in the future will have to face many issues and participate in making many decisions of an economic and public policy nature affecting their own as well as national welfare. These are in relation to international, national, and local economic problems of monetary and credit policies, tax policies and public indebtedness, price control, production policies, distribution controls, regulation of monopolistic practices, tariffs, labor and management policies, international relations and trade, regional competition, regional adjustments, public facilities, land use, and similar economic problems.

b. *Marketing and distribution.* Closely related to the above problems are the ones relating to market demands for farm products as to volume, quality and kind; necessary improvements in transportation services, marketing methods, and merchandising programs; methods of increasing efficiency and lowering costs of distribution, consumer preferences and the relative nutritional and market values of different grades and kinds of foods; grading and standardizing products to meet market demands; new methods of processing and packaging; new market and storage facilities; adjustments in transportation costs, trade barriers and tariffs; determination of the need for cooperatives; organization, operation, and financing procedures applicable to cooperatives.

c. *Social relationships, adjustments, and cultural values.* It is now recognized that attention needs to be given to man's relation to his family, his community, and to society as a whole; that recreation and wise use of leisure time are of concern; that the growth and well-being of children, the adjustment and development of youth, the creation of an attractive home and community life are matters to which the extension service must give attention. The social relationships of the rural family in the community are becoming more complex; farm and urban dwellers are becoming more interdependent; and there tends to be greater family and community

instability as farmers become more dependent upon national and world-wide social and economic forces.

d. *Farm homes and buildings.* The farmer's home has not been what it should be; the extension service needs to give attention to teaching basic principles in planning and constructing farm homes and buildings for efficiency, economy, and satisfaction, including location, architectural plan and appearance in keeping with intended use and requirements, economical and appropriate materials, safety, sanitation, convenience, efficiency, labor saving devices and equipment, maintenance, repair and remodeling, protection, landscaping and roads, and use of building materials and farm labor.

e. *Health.* Good health among rural people is a pre-requisite to sustained food production and a stable rural economy. The extension service has an obligation to teach basic facts regarding health conditions in rural areas and facilities needed to promote improvement; methods of improving health conditions through group action; principles underlying successful group action in the field; income and population essential to attract and maintain necessary facilities and services; and means of providing adequately for health protection and care.

f. *Conservation of natural resources.* The prevention of soil losses; soil conservation practices related to crop production; conservation of water, including its economic use in irrigation; conservation of forests and prevention of destruction by fire, overgrazing, or improper lumbering operations; restoration of productive value and natural beauty to soil-depleting areas; conservation of fish and wildlife and their natural habitats; these are matters demanding the attention of the Extension Service.

g. *Farm and home management.* The Extension Service should give attention to teaching principles to be observed in selecting a farm and getting started in farming; planning farm production to insure the best use of production resources, efficiency of operation, and maximum income consistent with good land use; adjustments in farm and home operation in light of changing price and income situations; planning for production of home food supply; part-time farming; best use of human resources, including hired labor;

methods of making work easier and safer; proper selection, care and use of farm and household supplies; equipment, clothing, and household furnishings; application of principles of sound financial planning and purchasing; management of income, savings, and credit in relation to farm, home, and family needs. These must be gauged in terms of supplying a satisfactory income and living standard for farm families.

h. Rural organization and leadership development. We have seen how complex and confused the organizational situation can be in the average rural community. Part of the task of the Extension Service is to teach the application of scientific principles of rural organization, maintenance, and effective use; principles and techniques of program planning; ways of motivating people to accept responsibility and act cooperatively in solving group and community problems; methods of conducting meetings and discussions; the selection, training, and motivation of volunteer leaders to help people help themselves.

i. Agricultural production. The traditional task of Extension Service has been to teach better production practices. For the present and future emphasis must be upon soil management and fertilization; crop production, rotation, harvesting, and farm storage; pasture and range management; seed improvement and hybridization; vegetable and fruit production; insect, rodent, and plant-disease control; production of livestock and livestock products; improvement of dairy herds, livestock and poultry; control of diseases, parasites, and insects affecting animals; tree planting and sustained forest management; and maintenance of farm power and equipment. The production of adequate amount of high-quality crop and livestock products is basic to the economic welfare of the nation.²

3. ORGANIZATION FOR THE WORK. Extension service is an educational system; it is responsible for diffusing information, developing interest in improved practices, and stimulating action by the people themselves; it is an out-of-school service for rural

² Report of the Committee of Extension's Educational Responsibility, *op. cit.*

people irrespective of their residence, age, economic status, group affiliations, or other factors of distinction. To serve all rural people with the limited staff employed on national, state and county bases only the development of local leaders and organizations on the community and neighborhood basis or cooperating with already organized groups is essential. We have already described the manner of organization in previous chapters. The plans for carrying agricultural extension work to the localities range from individual service by the county agents or meetings with groups called for special purposes, to well organized groups in the community to hold regular meetings and carry on projects.⁴

Farm Credit Administration

Farmers in the United States are getting an increasing amount of the credit needs satisfied through the farm credit system called the Farm Credit Administration; its district and local associations provide farmers and their marketing, purchasing, and business service associations with cooperative credit at reasonable rates. It also provides research and technical assistance on the organization and operating problems of farmers' cooperatives.

1. THE ORGANIZATION PLAN. The permanent units of the system operate on a cooperative basis. Local farm loan associations, which are usually located in county-seat towns, are farmer-owned and farmer-controlled and handle the making of landbank (long-term farm mortgage) loans. Each farmer subscribes at the time his loan is made, to 5 per cent of the amount of the loan in stock in his association. The association, in turn, subscribes to stock in the Federal Land Bank. The local associations also handle Land Bank Commissioner loans.

Production credit associations are similarly organized. Each farmer-member is eligible to a vote in the election of local offices for the organization. Regular board meetings are called and contacts are made with the membership through annual meetings, house organs, and personal contacts by the paid field personnel.

⁴C. R. Hoffer, "Selected Social Factors Affecting Participation of Farmers in Agricultural Extension Work." East Lansing: Agr. Exp. Sta. Bull. 331, June, 1944.

The organization is thus controlled by the members; each member owns stock in the association equal to 5 per cent of the maximum amount of his loan. Stock in banks for cooperatives, likewise, is owned by farmer-cooperative borrowers equal to a specified percentage of the amount of the loan.

2. **THE MANNER OF FUNCTIONING.** The initial capital of the associations was provided from capital allocated from a revolving fund set up under the provisions of the Farm Credit Act of 1933. The Federal Intermediate Credit Banks make loans to and discount paper for the production credit associations, obtaining these funds through the sale of consolidated collateral trust debentures to investors. These banks also provide production credit through discounting agricultural paper for privately capitalized agricultural credit institutions. They provide credit for farmers' cooperatives by making loans to and discounts for the banks for cooperatives and by making some loans directly to cooperatives.⁵

Farmers Home Administration

The administration was created by a Secretary's of Agriculture memorandum following the passage of the Act for the organization on August 14, 1946. It took over the functions of the Farm Security Administration and FCA's Emergency Crop and Feed Loan Division.

1. **THE PURPOSE OF THE ORGANIZATION.** Farmers who cannot secure credit from any other agency can turn to the Farmers Home Administration; it is especially useful to small farmers who wish to improve their farming operations or to become owners. The loans are supplemented with individual guidance in farm and home management when necessary.

2. **THE SERVICE AVAILABLE.** Farmers who are eligible can get production and subsistence loans up to \$3,500 for buying livestock, seed, feed, fertilizer, farm equipment, supplies, and other farm needs, for refinancing chattel mortgages, and for family subsistence. Also, 40-year farm ownership loans, at 3½ per cent interest, may be made for an amount up to the reasonable value of the farm and

⁵ T. Swann Harding, "Constituent Agencies of the U. S. Department of Agriculture." Washington: USDA Document No. 2, 1946.

necessary improvements, to buy, improve, or enlarge family-type farms; but these loans may not be made to buy, improve, or enlarge farms which have a greater value, as acquired, improved, or enlarged, than the average efficient family-type farm in the county or locality. Mortgage insurance is also available at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent charges, for 4-year loans made by private lenders for the same purposes as direct farm ownership loans with the amount borrowed limited to 90 per cent of the reasonable value of the farm and necessary improvements. Veterans have preference for real-estate loans and mortgage insurance and disabled veterans may obtain loans for farms smaller than economic family-type units. Whenever an FHA borrower becomes eligible for private or cooperative financing of his indebtedness and can obtain such financing on prevailing terms and at interest not exceeding 5 per cent, he must apply for and accept such credit.

3. THE SYSTEM OF ORGANIZATION. Farm and home supervisors are employed by the administration to serve a certain number of borrowers; most of these supervisors operate on a county basis. They work with the help and advice of local farmer-member advisory committees, especially to pass upon the merits of applicants.

The local supervisors, under the Farm Security Administration, endeavored to form their borrowers into groups for educational and cooperative purposes. As result many self-help groups for securing up-to-date information of farming and homemaking, for purchase of bulls, machinery, or supplies, and for setting up group medical plans were organized.⁶

A significant element in the organizational system is the plan requiring that every borrower make out a farm and home plan, and under the supervision provided be aided in the carrying out of the plan.

Production and Marketing Administration

The most widespread system for the organization of a direct-action agency, probably, was that of the Agricultural Adjustment

⁶"Coops for the Small Farmer." Washington: USDA Farm Security Administration, 1940, page 6.

Administration. Its system called for and secured the election of farmer committees in every local community in which farmer-cooperators were to be found, and at one time more than 90 per cent of the agricultural producers in the United States were cooperators. At the close of World War II, however, the functions of the AAA were consolidated with those of 13 other governmental agencies, but the chief form of organization affecting the farmer directly was that growing out of AAA activities before and during the war.

1. **ACTIVITIES, FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.** The field of activities for the new administration is broad and inclusive; the three general fields include: (1) Planning, developing, coordinating, and administering production and marketing programs. These include price support, subsidy, lending, buying, selling, storage, and transporting of farm commodities and products; agricultural marketing activities, including processing and marketing quotas, exports, surplus disposals, agricultural conservation and adjustment, school lunch, and direct distribution; interstate and foreign labor supply; farm income improvement, improvement of nutritional standards, and use of surplus agricultural materials, equipment, and facilities. (2) Determining food allocation recommendations. This includes import requirements, maximum price regulations, collection and dissemination of market news, regulatory activities such as inspections, grading, and standardization, and administration of food limitation and conservation orders. (3) Planning, directing, and coordinating programs authorized under the provision of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act of 1936, as amended, and the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938, as amended and supplemented. This includes, also, administration of the program of insurance protection for certain crops under the Federal Crop Insurance Act, as amended, the Sugar Act of 1937, as amended, and making use of the authority and powers of the Commodity Credit Corporation for program operations. The PMA, also, represents the Department and serves as liaison for functions assigned to PMA.

2. **ORGANIZATION AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL.** At the federal level there are 10 functional branches, 6 staff offices, and the Com-

modity Credit Corporation. For the commodities under its jurisdiction, each of the commodity branches has general responsibility, including:

a. Planning and recommending production goals and encouraging achievement of these goals through adjustments, marketing quotas, import or export programs, etc.

b. Making recommendations for support and maintenance of farm prices, and in most cases executing plans for carrying out governmental commitments through loans, support prices, subsidies, diversions, and purchases.

c. Developing and executing programs to assist in processing and orderly distribution of farm products.

d. Arranging for sales and distribution of Government-owned surplus products by sales and distribution through school lunch programs and other outlets.

e. Keeping informed on supply and demand and participating in supply estimate and allocation recommendations.

Other functions include rationing advice, standardization, grading and marketing, regulatory duties, administration of marketing agreements, aid in developing new products and new uses for old products, and maintaining contacts with industry advisory committees. Truly these are complicated and stupendous duties, if properly carried out, and serve to indicate the extent to which government has entered into the field of agriculture.

3. ORGANIZATION OF FIELD SERVICES. The Federal services flow through state and local offices, using state and county committees, and keeping contact with farmers through the regular election of community committees. County committees are called upon to hold annual meetings for the election of community and county committees, and meetings in the communities are called from time to time to discuss and explain the program and to provide opportunity for making applications for cooperation. The community committees are used to help work out farm plans and to check on compliance as a basis for making payments to farmers for practices carried on as called for in agreements.

Rural Electrification Administration

The provision of electric power for an increasing number of farms and farm homes has meant the difference between drudgery for many homes on the one hand, and the provision of modern conveniences with attendant time for leisure and self improvement on the other hand. The REA came into being in 1935 with the ultimate objective of helping rural people benefit from the services of electricity.

1. **METHOD OF REACHING THE OBJECTIVE.** The principal way of meeting the objective of providing rural people with electricity was, and still is, lending money to build or buy power facilities to reach people without electricity. REA operates no electric facilities and makes no grants. Under the Rural Electrification Act, REA is authorized to lend funds to cooperatives, public utility districts, municipalities, or power companies to finance electric generation, transmission, and distribution facilities in order to bring electricity to persons in rural areas not receiving central station service. The Act also authorizes loans to finance the wiring of rural establishments and the purchase of appliances by those receiving service.

2. **EXTENT OF THE SERVICE.** The growth from 45,000 consumers on REA-financed lines, in 1937, to over 1,675,000 in 1946 shows the tremendous growth of the service. Assuming that each consumer represents a farm family, allowing something for town and commercial consumers, more than one in six families now have electricity; in some states more than half of the farms are electrified.⁷

3. **MEANS OF SECURING ELECTRIC POWER.** All REA loans are self-liquidating. Repayment is required over a period of 35 years with interest at 2 per cent. The Administrator may approve no loan unless in his judgment these repayment terms can be met from operation of the system to be financed. REA also provides its borrowers with technical advice that will help the local management to operate in accordance with the terms of its loan contract with the government.⁸

⁷ "Progress Report." Washington: Rural Electrification News, Vol. 12, No. 5, USDA, January 1947, page 5.

⁸ Harding, *op. cit.*, page 42.

Efforts are made to give every farmer in any community electric service if he wants it. Borrowers are therefore urged to provide service on an area-wide or community-wide basis; there is no "skimming the cream" of the families in a new territory. In thinly settled territories the borrowers group farms into power systems with those in more populous areas. In this way, they are able to serve entire rural communities at uniformly low rates.

Farmer participation in the REA system is by membership in the cooperatives that furnish the service. These cooperatives may either build plants to make their own electricity or buy it wholesale from some private company. Various means are used to maintain membership contact, such as annual meetings of patrons, house organs, radio broadcasts, etc. Since the cooperatives usually operate in areas composing several counties it is difficult to maintain regular membership contact.

Soil Conservation Service

The conservation of the nation's soil resources has become a matter of great national concern. The Soil Conservation Act was approved by the 74th Congress without a dissenting vote; it was signed by the President April 27, 1935. The language of the Act recognizes "that the wastage of soil and moisture resources on farm, grazing, and forest lands of the nation, resulting from soil erosion, is a menace to the national welfare and that it is hereby declared to be the policy of Congress to provide permanently for the control and prevention of soil erosion and thereby preserve natural resources, control floods, prevent impairment of reservoirs, and maintain the navigability of rivers and harbors, protect public health, public lands, and relieve unemployment. . . ."⁹

1. THE METHOD FOR CARRYING OUT THE ACT. The Secretary of Agriculture was directed by the Act to establish an agency to be known as the Soil Conservation Service. Its basic purpose is to bring about physical adjustments in land use that will better human welfare, conserve natural resources, establish a permanent and balanced agriculture, and reduce the hazards of floods and sedimen-

⁹ *Ibid.*, page 42.

tation. This calls for the development of a well-rounded, coordinated program of soil and water conservation and land use. The program involves planning of individual farms and ranches, group facilities for the use and disposal of water as it affects the land, work with soil conservation districts and on watersheds or other use areas.

2. THE SYSTEM OF LOCAL ORGANIZATION. The core organization for contacting the farmer is the soil conservation district. After 51 per cent of the bona fide land owners of a designated area (usually a county) have signed petitions and have voted favorably for setting up a district, legal means are provided for doing so under the laws of the state (almost all states having enacted such legislation following soon after the enactment of the federal law). Upon passage of the vote a district board of land owners is elected who are in direct control of the district under the terms of the state and federal laws. The board carries on the necessary business including the hiring of soil technicians and agronomists who are paid out of federal funds. The chief task of these men is to assist farmers in the making of farm plans that will provide full conservation protection. Districts under the law have the power of passing ordinances for soil conserving practices, but these ordinances require three-fourths of the votes of all land owners in the district to become effective. Under them all land operators can be forced to carry out the ordinances so enacted.

3. THE PRACTICES ENCOURAGED. Practically all conservation districts use educational means for the carrying out of their programs. In making out farm plans efforts are made to use as many of the 50 or more major carefully tested soil and water conservation practices as will apply. Among the more common of these practices are contouring, strip cropping, terracing, land leveling, drainage, irrigation, crop rotations, and conservation range, woodland, and wildlife management. Though individual farmers are urged to use the practices, some of them are most effective only if carried on by all of the farmers in the neighborhood.

4. THE NECESSITY FOR GROUP METHODS. Most farmers are influenced to use or change practices by what is done by the better and socially accepted farmers of the community. Individual farmers

acting alone or independently of their neighbors are faced with two major difficulties: (1) the censure of the neighbors, and (2) the damage done by lack of practices on neighboring farms. Hence the most recent efforts by the Soil Conservation Service have been to include in their educational methods the use of what are called small group planning methods. Several neighbors with farms adjacent and in the same drainage basin or neighborhood are induced to come together and make cooperative plans so that all farms in the area are carrying on the same or similar practices. These groups meet regularly in one or another of the members' homes and place their own plans before the entire group for discussion and comment. The presence of a technician in these meetings makes it possible to get needed practices "sold" to the group which he would find difficult to get accepted by working with individuals alone. If the group decides that a certain practice is good it is difficult for one member not to go along on it.

The work in putting a program of soil conservation into practice is made easier, moreover, through a community approach. Many of the land owners may live in the villages or towns; they and other town people need to be shown the importance of the conservation of the soil. Church leaders, particularly, have been of significant influence. When the people in the entire community see the necessity for proper conservation of the soil it can become preached from the pulpits, taught in the schools, discussed in community men's, women's, youth and other club meetings of the community, and as a result the people become conservation minded. Then it is difficult if not impossible for aging land owners to urge exploitation practices in order to get the most out the land while they live; and stability on the land is encouraged which is reflected in stability of life in the entire community.

Efforts have been made to set up small neighborhood, sometimes called "kitchen" meetings. From three to ten farmers and their wives meet in one of the farmer's homes to discuss their farm plans. Usually one of the district conservationists is present to go over the various plans with the group. Thus each farmer looks at his conservation plan in terms of what his neighbor is doing; as

important, however, is the opportunity to work out neighborhood cooperative plans for conservation and in this way improve the effectiveness of the work on each of the farms in the group.

Group work in soil conservation, from a conservation point of view, is best done on a drainage basin basis. Often, however, streams are natural barriers between neighborhoods; hence group work in soil conservation may cut across the boundary lines of two or more neighborhoods. It is important to recognize that there are natural group habits and that each natural group, such as a neighborhood, has its own leaders; the success of the group conservation project is dependent, to an extent, upon the success in which these natural leaders are found and their cooperation secured in the venture.

A significant step in advance of the neighborhood group method is to carry on community conservation work. The TVA has been especially successful in getting entire small communities to work toward a community-wide program.¹⁰ The farmers and their families, the town-centered landowners, the church leaders, the teachers in the schools, the bankers, and all similar leaders are brought into the picture. Conservation projects carried out on a community-wide basis have great promise for democratic control of erosion and the building up of the nation's soils.

Organization for Vocational Education

The work of the Vocational Agricultural Education Service is of equal importance to farmers as extension work, operating as it does in a complementary fashion in the community and primarily through youth. It recognizes the fact that farming today is an occupational career requiring direct and specific educational training for those who choose it as a life vocation.¹¹

1. THE SYSTEM OF ORGANIZATION. The program for vocational agricultural education is supported by federal funds made available

¹⁰ David Lilienthal, "Democracy on the March." New York: Harpers & Bros., 1944.

¹¹ "The Organization and Administration of Vocational Agriculture in Illinois." Springfield: Bull. No. 73, Board For Vocational Education, 1939, page 9.

through the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, providing for cooperation with the states in the promotion of vocational education, with extensions to Hawaii in 1924 and in 1931 to Puerto Rico; and the George-Deen Act which provided additional appropriations for the further development of vocational education in the various states and territories, including added support for agriculture and home economics.

The national funds are administered by the Office of Education. A federal Advisory Board for Vocational Education has been set up and meets on call to discuss with the Federal Commissioner of Education and his staff, problems on which the opinions and recommendations of the Board are desired. In addition the Commissioner has appointed special committees, such as the National Committee on Standards in Agricultural Education, made up of a State supervisor or a State teacher trainer of agricultural education from states in each of the four geographical regions in which the country is divided for federal administrative purposes.

State Boards for Vocational Education are set up to administer the programs in the states, give approval, help and advice to local high school boards desiring to take advantage of the service. The local community must not only raise funds supplemented by state and Federal funds; it also must fulfil certain program and facility requirements before departments can be set up in the community.¹²

2. ORGANIZATION IN THE COMMUNITY. Many communities carry on vocational agricultural and home economics work through the local school administration. A movement to set up advisory committees, however, is spreading; such a committee advises, guides, and directs the entire program of vocational education in the community. "It has been found that such a committee gives the best expression of community interests and needs. It gives better assurance of smooth, efficient, and effective operation of the part-time and evening school program; and it makes for greater democracy in the planning and operation of the complete program.

¹² Digest of Annual Reports of State Boards for Vocational Education to the U. S. Office of Education, Vocational Division." Washington: Federal Security Agency, U. S. Office of Education, 1944.

"The committee should consist of seven or nine members, nominated by the teacher of agriculture, appointed by the principal, and approved by the Board of Education. Membership should be representative of the different local agricultural interests and not chosen to represent any particular organization. The president of the local F. F. A. chapter should be selected for the all-day school group, and the chairman of the special part-time and evening councils should be selected from these two groups to serve on the general advisory committee. Members should be chosen for a definite term of not more than 3 years."¹³

Other Governmental Services

Many other governmental services function in relation to agriculture but they do not have the same direct representation of farmers in their systems of organization that can be seen for those described above. These include the Agricultural Research Administration, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, the Office of Budget and Finance, the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations, The Office of Information, etc.¹⁴ Their services are important to agriculture and their influences are felt in the affairs of agriculture. Many new agencies were created and others abolished as result of the war. A description of these changes is not possible or in point here.

Efforts have been made, however, to create planning bodies in the Department which would have organic relations in the counties, communities and neighborhoods of the Nation. One of the most significant of these efforts was the Land Use Planning program initiated shortly before World War II. The organizational plan was an elaborate one: It called for the setting up of widely representative committees on the regional, state, county and community basis, with representatives selected as cooperators in every rural neighborhood. These leaders were under the direct supervision of the Planning agency in the Washington office; they carried on their

¹³ H. M. Hamlin, "Using Advisory Councils in Agricultural Education." Bur. of Ed. Res. Bull. 63, Uni. of Ill. Coll. of Ed., Urbana, 1947, page 22.

¹⁴ Harding, *op. cit.*

work, however, with the cooperation of state college of agriculture extension service workers. Funds for the efforts were withdrawn before the entry of the United States into the war, however, partly because some groups feared that they would lead to the organization of a new governmentally dominated farmers' organization.¹⁵

Experiences with the efforts at land use planning, which took on much broader aspects than just land use planning in some counties and states and which were continued in many for some time after the cessation of national efforts, were reflected in the system of agricultural or extension education set up soon after the outbreak of the war. In order that every farmer and farm home might be reached effectively a plan was devised to select at least two representatives to work with the extension service on its war-time programs in every neighborhood or local country school district in the country. The plan of organization was never completed, and it was abandoned in some states in a year or two after it was originated, but it was developed successfully in many parts of the country. The success of the venture depended largely upon the type of functions which the local leaders were called upon to perform as well as upon the manner in which these leaders were selected. The leaders who were given tasks which they felt they could carry out usually did so, especially under the impetus of war necessity. More important, however, leaders who functioned best were those who were selected by their neighbors.¹⁶ In many cases group activities were called for; in such cases the natural neighborhood groups in the habit of cooperating were the most effective.

International Organization

We are coming slowly to realize that we are living in a world community. Progress is being made in the development both of governmentally sponsored international organizations affecting

¹⁵ See "Land Use Planning Under Way." Washington: United States Department of Agriculture, July, 1940. This gives the plan, the system of organization, and how the plan was working in a number of the counties in various states over the nation.

¹⁶ D. E. Lindstrom, "Extension Service Jumps Back to the Neighborhood." *Rur. Soc.*, Vol. 8, No. 4, Dec. 1943, pages 412-415.

agriculture and the formation of a world farmers' organization. These efforts are stimulated on the one hand by the realization that the welfare of farmers in every country is affected by international forces; they are hampered by the difficulties which farmers and agricultural leaders face in forming such organizations.

1. INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS.

At the international farmers' conference held in London, England, in May of 1946, an International Federation of Agricultural Producers was set up on a provisional basis. The following countries were fully accredited and participated as full members with voting rights in the conference:

Australia	France	Norway
Belgium	India	Rhodesia
Canada	Luxembourg	United Kingdom
Denmark	Netherlands	United States
	New Zealand	

Eighteen other countries were represented as observers with the privileges of the conference except that of voting.

The pronouncements of the conference reflected the thinking and philosophies of farmers everywhere in the world: (1) The opportunity to produce abundantly in order to feed the people of the world better, but they want to know that such a program is well planned and organized so that surpluses will not accumulate and re-act disastrously on food producers while at the same time hungry people are unable to obtain food. (2) A stable market at a remunerative price, projected sufficiently far ahead to enable them to plan their production with confidence. (3) An end to the international economic anarchy which contributed so largely to the chaos and distress of the "thirties." (4) Stability of prices for major products in international trade in order that their domestic economies may be maintained on a secure basis. (5) The opportunity and means to work together on measures to prevent world conditions which would bankrupt producers in some countries, compel producers to exploit the fertility of the soil, give the farmer and his hired help pitifully small wages for their work and often require members of their families to work for nothing, and not

permit the efficient farmer to maintain his farm unit properly in respect to buildings, fences, drains, roads, and other improvements.¹⁷

The London conference was the culmination of plans developed over a long period of time by such leaders as the president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, an organization of all of the farmers' organizations and cooperatives in Canada. The United States delegation represented four major farmers' organizations, namely, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Grange, the Farmers' Union, and the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives.

Though the emphasis of the international organization is economic, its work will not be fully effective unless and until due attention is given to social problems as well: Population, health, education, recreation, and the cultural life of rural people. Such an international body can and should be an important force in support of such an international organization as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

2. THE WORK OF FAO. "The Food and Agriculture Organization is born out of the idea of freedom from want. . . . Freedom from want means the conquest of hunger and the attainment of the ordinary needs of a decent self-respecting life. . . . This generation goes beyond the conviction that freedom from want can be achieved and believes that the effort to achieve it has become imperative . . . the world's resources must be better used for human welfare and nations must work together rather than at cross purposes, or our civilization may go down to destruction.

"Thus the Food and Agriculture Organization is born out of the need for peace as well as the need for freedom from want. The two are interdependent. Peace is essential if there is to be progress toward freedom from want, for the insatiable demands of modern war on a world scale will in the end take all men can produce. Progress toward freedom from want is essential to lasting peace; for it is a condition of freedom from the tensions, arising out of

¹⁷H. H. Hamam, "The International Federation of Agricultural Producers." Washington: Statement before FAO, PR 47, Dec. 20, 1946.

economic maladjustment, profound discontent, and a sense of injustice, which are so dangerous in the close community of modern nations."¹⁸

Because it was the belief that international organization is urgently needed to accelerate throughout the world the advance of scientific knowledge and its application to human affairs, the FAO has been set up to fulfil such a function in the area represented by food and agriculture. Moreover, it will help nations translate the findings of scientists and economists progressively into practicable administrative programs. It has no legislative or executive powers and comparatively few administrative ones; it cannot coerce anyone, yet it can have great influence by working with and through governments: Helping develop agricultural, nutrition, forestry, and fisheries policies more effectively, giving such aid to less well developed nations, acting as an intermediary to obtain aid from many sources, initiating proposals for action on measures for international agreement or cooperation, encouraging research, and becoming a focal point for exchange of information and for discussions and meetings between scientists and technologists from different countries.¹⁹

The only world organization of long standing is the International Institute of Agriculture in Rome, which for nearly forty years has undertaken work in the collection of agricultural statistics and in furthering international collaboration in the numerous technical agricultural subjects. Recommendations have been made, however, for the amalgamation of the I. I. A. with FAO. The same is true for three other international bodies: the Centre International de Sylviculture, the Comité International du Bois, and the International Union of Forest Research Organizations. The general principle to be followed is that world-wide official organizations should be merged into FAO. Also, since its work is so largely agricultural and economic, it will have a relationship to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

¹⁸ "The Work of FAO." Washington: United Nations Interim Commission on Food and Agriculture, August, 1945, pages 1-2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pages 35-38.

The work and results of these international organizations must be made part and parcel of the lives of farmers all over the world, if the stated objectives are to be reached. Since wars start in the minds of men, so it is essential that there be implanted in the minds of men the idea that wars can be done away with for all time to come. The realization of freedom from want and the feeling of security that come to all farm and rural people everywhere in that realization will be the chief factor in the preservation of a peaceful world.

READINGS

- HARDING, T. SWANN, "Constituent Agencies of the U. S. Department of Agriculture." Washington: USDA Document No. 2, 1946.
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- "Land Use Planning Under Way." Washington: United States Department of Agriculture, July, 1940.
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- "Report of the Committee on the Scope of Extension's Educational Responsibility." Washington: U. S. Department of Agriculture Extension Service, January, 1946.
- "The Work of the FAO." Washington: United Nations Interim Commission on Food and Agriculture, August, 1945.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Outline briefly the purposes of the Extension Service. How is the Extension Service organized to carry out these purposes; in what ways are local farmer voluntary leaders used?
2. What is an effective system of organization for vocational agricultural work in the community?
3. What is the organizational plan for the Farm Credit Administration? In what ways do farmers cooperate in making these services available?
4. What are the services available from the Farmers Home Administration? How are farm leaders made a part of the program?
5. Indicate the services of the Production Marketing Administration for which farm leaders are selected. How are these leaders selected?

6. What are the methods for reaching the objectives of the Rural Electrification Administration? What is the meaning and significance of area-wide service? How do farm leaders take part in the organization for the service?
7. Describe the manner in which farmers take part in organizing Soil Conservation Districts? What is meant by the group planning method?
8. What was the organizational pattern for land use planning efforts in the period immediately before World War II? Upon what factors do such efforts depend for success?
9. Briefly state the objective desired by the International Federation of Agricultural Producers? What are some of the serious omissions?
10. What are the primary motives back of the organization of the World Food and Agriculture Organization? How will the organization function to attain these ends.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. What social and organizational factors are most significant in securing farmer participation in Extension work? Hoffer.
2. Analyse the system of organization for vocational education to show the participation of local farmers and youth in the planning and carrying out of programs in the community. Hamlin.
3. Outline from Harding's document the changes made in the various USDA agencies before, during, and after World War II.
4. Appraise the neighborhood system for adult education, showing its possibilities and limitations.
5. Outline the services of FAO and indicate their significance for human and especially farm welfare the world over.

EXERCISE

Analyse your own community: what government agencies serve it? How do farmers take part in their administration? What methods are used in the selection of these leaders? To what extent are the same persons chosen for the various positions of leadership? To what extent do the farmers in your community secure the benefits of each service?

PART IV

Organizational Processes and Principles

It is said that a chain is no stronger than its weakest link. In a sense an organization is effective only if it serves every member in the neighborhood or community effectively and gets effective participation from every member; to a degree the non-participating member or the inactive local unit is the weak link in the chain. Farmers' organizations which place emphasis, therefore, upon making effective member contact, not only to give service but to secure participation, are most likely to succeed. The most democratic organizational system, and the one which best provides member contact, is that which is based upon active local or community units. This section deals primarily, therefore, with the processes and principles of local organization, although it is recognized that the system of county, state, and national organization is of equal importance. The leaders of the larger administrative parts of the organization, if recruited from the local groups, usually give loyal support and service to the organization often because of their experience in the local group; administrators hired to serve the larger bodies are usually chosen for their ability to serve. Thus these larger parts are usually handled adequately; it is the local unit with its voluntary leadership that is in need of constant help and attention.

CHAPTER XX

THE PROCESS OF STIMULATION AND PROMOTION

How do farmers' organizations get started? What keeps them going after they are once organized? The study of the history of farmers organizations would lead one to believe that they get started when economic conditions are bad; or when some outstanding leader goes out to sell the idea of organization to farmers; or because some other group has become organized forming the pattern for the organization in question.

We have seen how the early agricultural societies, fairs and farmers' clubs came into being in the United States through leadership having had experience with English patterns; how leaders of the Grange sensed the need for a social organization to lift the economic level of farm families both in the North and in the South; how unrest due to pressure of adverse economic and social conditions in all periods of the country's history, led farmers to seek redress through organization; and how new organizations were almost invariably patterned to a greater or less degree on earlier or contemporary organizations seeking similar ends.

Stimulation to Recognition of Need

The success of any organized effort depends upon the extent to which it meets the *felt* needs of the group being organized. This assumes not only a need for organization but emphasizes the importance of a *recognition* of need on the part of the people for whom the organization is meant. An organization can be started only when the people come to believe that their recognized needs can be met by means of organization.

1. METHODS OF GETTING PEOPLE INTERESTED. Rural people have been stirred to a sense of needs which can be met through organization in numerous ways. Recognition of the desire for human association, that greater security can be had by groups than by individual action, that by working together greater values can come to the group than otherwise, all will stimulate organization.

a. *Mutual interest.* People settling in a new country or feeling the need for getting together, have gathered in homes, schools, churches, or in other meeting centers; many farmers' and community clubs have resulted from such meetings. If the need or desire is sufficiently urgent subsequent meetings are called for, someone takes the leadership in making arrangements, and a local organization develops. This is the simplest and most natural way in which an organization can start. The more interests which members of the groups have in common and the more important their meeting together comes to be in meeting their common needs, the more enduring will the organization likely to be.

"It is the natural instinct," states Arvold, "of the majority of the people to want to belong to something. It may be a club, a society, an association or an order of some kind. To better themselves in their profession, to improve their business conditions, to elevate their social standing, and to do something for the benefit of humanity, prompts people to join societies or clubs."¹ By coming together regularly in the neighborhood or community the people develop closer social lives, they learn to work together, they get many things done which would not or could not be done otherwise, they keep themselves abreast of the changes affecting farm people, and they come to feel much more a part of the organization in which they have been induced to become members.

b. *Local leader suggestion.* A people may struggle as individuals under adverse economic or social conditions, not realizing what an organization can do to alleviate these adverse conditions, until someone shows them how to work together to lift their own burdens. This may be someone within the group who has had experience with organized effort in other areas; or it may be someone from the outside who educates the group to a recognition of needs which can be met by organization.

c. *Membership campaigns.* Leaders of organizations which have become established in other areas put on educational campaigns in new areas in order to spread their organization to the

¹ Alfred G. Arvold, "Neighborhood Activities in Country Communities," Cir. 171, Extension Service, N. D. Agr. Coll., 1940.

new area. The educational effort, to be successful, must convince the people that they have needs which can be met by organization and that the proposed organization is the one which can meet those needs. Hence, various types of membership campaigns are put on—some organizations spend considerable sums of money in these educational and promotional efforts. In most farm organizations, however, much of the promotional work is done by unpaid voluntary leaders.

(1) The Grange starts new organizations by a combination of outside stimulation and local group meetings. Deputies, who go into new farm communities to organize new granges, must first make personal contacts with sympathetic people in the locality.² They must sell the Grange program sufficiently to enough people so that they are willing to come to a meeting for the purpose of getting the organization under way. They must create sufficient enthusiasm among some of these people so that they will be willing to take leadership: hold office, plan programs, learn the ritual, and in other ways promote the organization in the community. They must be able to demonstrate that the Grange can and does help meet some of their needs: their need for sociability; their need for new information; their need for higher incomes or better living standards; and to engender a belief that the Grange can help them get those things. Unless the new organization satisfies some need of the people to whom it appeals there is little chance that it will succeed in the new area.

(2) The Farm Bureau uses various methods of establishing organizations in new areas. The membership campaign is one of the methods used; it stresses individual contacts. The professional leaders of the organization come into a county to meet voluntary leaders selected from each community or township by the county farm bureau board.

The steps in planning a state-wide campaign are (1) to hold a meeting of the state organization committee, (2) bring its recommendations before the state board of directors, (3) meet with the

² See "National Grange Lecturer's Handbook," prepared by the National Grange, Springfield, Mass.

county board of directors, (4) hold community meetings, (5) have a school of instruction for membership workers for selling demonstrations, (6) visit prospective members in the field and (7) have a report meeting for the workers.³ A day is set aside to carry on the campaign. Two or three volunteer workers may start out in the morning with a professional leader calling on prospective members. Each team is urged to call on every farmer in the community or township during the day; (sometimes they mistakenly counsel against and avoid visiting certain farmers who they think of as hardened objectors to organization—these people may just be waiting to be visited). As the day progresses the volunteer leaders may go alone to new prospects. Thus the farm bureau story is told by the farmer member to his neighbor non-member. In such campaigns the primary emphasis is often placed upon immediate, personal, and material benefits to be secured from the organization. In such individual service campaigns one of the sales arguments can be and often is that a member of the organization can get several times his dues back again in the form of patronage dividends from Farm Bureau sponsored cooperatives. This is a good sales argument from the standpoint of getting members, especially when it can be demonstrated that the non-member actually loses money by remaining out of the organization.

Over emphasis can be put upon commercial advantages of an organization; members thus sold may remain in the organization only so long as they can secure dollar-for-dollar returns, and many can use poor service or abuse of this commercial advantage as an argument to stay out or fight the organization. It is well for individual service campaigns, therefore, to emphasize not only the commercial but other benefits of the organization as well, for then members who see other economic as well as educational and social benefits in the organization are likely to be more loyal members. If in addition they are given to see how they can take part in building the kind of organization that will continue to provide them service and protection, and then are given some responsibility that will give

³ "A State-Wide Farm Bureau Membership Campaign." Chicago: American Farm Bureau Federation.

them a deeper insight into the greatness or essential nature of the organization, they may even come to be willing to sacrifice or fight for it in times of stress.

The above described group or individual methods for recruiting membership are in essence methods of getting farmers to see the need for organization. Each member, when he signs up, has his own reason for doing so; he signs in the first place because the organization will help him meet a felt need or one that he has realized can be met by organization. Many of these needs remain unexpressed and the only way in which the leaders of an organization can feel that needs are being met is to find that members will remain in the organization year after year. If there is a serious decline in membership in any area those failing to rejoin either feel that the organization is no longer meeting their needs or that they have found other means of meeting the needs. Efforts to discover needs, therefore, upon which to base programs are often fruitful.

d. *Planned meetings.* Various other means have been developed of stimulating rural people to a realization of needs which can be met by organization. Though often preceded by personal contacts neighborhood or community meetings are one of the most important means; such efforts may take the form of meeting with a few leaders in the community to talk about the needs for organization and the way in which such needs in other communities have been met by organization. In planning for such meetings the leaders must know of the needs in the communities which can be met by organization. Then they must locate local leaders in these communities who will help organize the meetings. Then the meetings must be held, not one, but several over a period of time, so that the people can see for themselves what the organization can do for them.

With the help of local committees, for example, plans can be made for several experimental meetings. These meetings are based on local needs and make use of program materials available from service agency sources. Local people are called upon for leadership, a local committee taking the major responsibility for conducting the meetings and providing educational, entertainment, and social pro-

gram material.⁴ Two good illustrations are (1) the plan outlined by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and (2) the Ohio Farm Bureau Advisory Council plan:

(1) "Let us assume that at the outset only you and a few of your friends and acquaintances are interested in organizing a P. T. A. Your first step will be to enlist the interest and support of other parents and to get the assurance, if you do not already have it, of cooperation from the principal and the teachers.

"The principal and teachers are likely to work with you heartily from the beginning; for nowadays most educators realize that schools can be improved much more rapidly when parents and other citizens know what the schools are doing and understand the need for better programs and methods. Members of the board of education, too—who are your own elected representatives—will probably be glad to have a citizen's organization to work with them.

"In ordinary friendly visits, in casual meetings at market or after church, the need for the parent-teacher group can be talked over and, when necessary, explained. Do not expect everyone to share your enthusiasm. Some will wait to be convinced by experience; a few will be indifferent or even oppose your plans. Don't be discouraged by that. When it seems fairly certain that most of the parents know something about the P. T. A. and what it can do for the community, and when you have a sizeable group of parents and teachers who are definitely committed to the enterprise, you are ready to move ahead and plan the first meeting."⁵

Arvold believes that three experimental meetings are needed. "At the first meeting a chairman and secretary are elected. The object of the meeting is stated. After it is thoroughly discussed a motion is introduced to the effect that it be the sense of those present that a permanent society be formed. It is open to debate. If the motion passes, the chairman appoints a committee of five to draft a constitution. The meeting then adjourns. After several days the second meeting is called, the minutes of the last meeting are read,

⁴D. E. Lindstrom and E. H. Regnier, "You Can Have Good Community Meetings." Urbana: Cir. 594, Ext. Ser. in Agr. and Home Ec., 1945.

⁵"The Rural P. T. A." Chicago: The National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1945.

and the committee appointed to draw up a constitution makes a report. The constitution is then read as a whole and, before adoption, article by article. Sometimes the articles are amended. When the chairman is absolutely convinced that everybody present is well satisfied with the constitution, he puts it to a vote.

"When a new society is formed only a majority vote is necessary for adoption. After adoption, those present who wish to become members sign the document. . . . The officers as named in the constitution are elected. Committees for various purposes are appointed. The second meeting is then adjourned. The third meeting is really the first regular meeting. The usual order of business is followed either before or after the regular program is presented."⁶

(2) "An Advisory Council begins with one or two alert people. Since a Council is a group of friendly families, both husband and wife usually share in starting one. They may call on two or three other families to help plan the first meeting. A local Farm Bureau worker, who is familiar with the Council program, is ready to give help as needed. Call on him.

"Here are the usual steps:

"1. Somebody—suppose it's you—gets the idea.

"2. You and your husband (or wife) may talk it over with a Farm Bureau Manager, Board member or other leader.

"3. You get together with two other couples to plan the meeting.

a. Make a list of families you want to invite. (Twelve families usually make a "full house.")

b. Decide on the home where the first meeting will be held.

c. Select a suitable date.

d. You may want to have a Farm Bureau worker present at the first meeting."⁷

At the first meeting considerable informality is maintained: The idea of the Council is explained; then, "a little taste of how a Council works is best proof; ask the group at this point to consider

⁶ *Op. cit.*, page 66.

⁷ "Farm Bureau Advisory Handbook." Columbus: Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, 1946.

itself a council for a few minutes. Each person is handed a slip of paper and a pencil and asked to jot down some thought, problem, or question." These questions may be read back and discussed briefly, but no conclusions are reached in this first meeting. Then "a brief period of recreation is in order."

2. **METHODS OF DISCOVERING NEEDS.** The life of farmers' and rural organizations depends upon the success with which they can adapt themselves to the needs of rural people. We have seen how every one of the farmers organizations have fluctuated in membership. It is apparent from an examination of the changes in membership that some of the organizations are more sensitive to economic changes than others; this is doubtless because of primary emphasis in their programs on economic problems or issues. It is well, therefore, for the leaders of organizations to check regularly as to the needs of farm and rural people which the organizations can, or, with some changes, may be able to meet.

a. *Discovery of needs by personal contact.* As has been indicated, the best sign that an organization is not meeting its members' needs is for it to begin to lose members. The closer the administration of the organization maintains contacts with members the more effectively will they be able to discern membership unrest and find out the reasons for such unrest. Most farm organizations maintain field contact men who visit those whose dues have become delinquent; they are in position to discover the reasons for unrest, especially if they are tactful enough to get and hold the confidence of those who become delinquent.

b. *Discovery of needs by local group discussion.* A more difficult method is for the leaders to face up frankly with the members in small group meetings to discover how the organization can improve its service to the members. If such meetings are held regularly and opportunities are given for free discussion members and leaders will soon come to look to such meetings as the means of keeping the organization attuned to the needs of members as they arise.⁸

⁸ "Discussion Leaders' Guide." East Lansing: Michigan Farm Bureau, 1945. See also D. E. Lindstrom, "Let's Talk It Over." Urbana: Uni. of Ill. Ext. Ser. in Agr. and Home Ec., Cir. 581, 1945.

c. *Discovery of needs by means of score cards.* Mention has already been made of the West Virginia system of rural organization. It used a method of scoring the various aspects of community life to show needs. This plan recognizes that "before a community becomes organized there is always some one person, or a group of folks who appreciate the value of organized community effort. This person may be a teacher, minister, county or home demonstration agent, or one of the community leaders. . . . It is generally desirable to have some discussion about the matter based on information obtained concerning what other organized communities are doing." The procedure involves calling a meeting to discuss organization, deciding by majority vote to organize and then to elect officers and appoint necessary committees. Community boundaries are mapped, a mailing list is made up and the community is scored by the officers with the help of Extension agents and others. The goal of the organization is then to improve the score from year to year.⁹ A similar plan has been worked out for Kentucky.¹⁰

d. *The survey as a means of determining needs.* The heart of agricultural planning is getting people to study their own condition as a basis for planning programs to improve those conditions. Inherent in agricultural planning, therefore, is stimulation of people to a realization of their needs and of ways and means of meeting those needs. The survey of present conditions may be elementary and cursory: to select by common knowledge the natural community centers as was done by planning committees in Garrard county, Kentucky, for example; or to make a more careful survey of the natural neighborhoods or groupings within the larger communities, a task requiring more careful study making use of technical assistance.¹¹ Once these natural groups are located, their leaders can be consulted relative to the outlining of specific prob-

⁹ A. H. Rapking, "Education Through Organized Community Activities," Cir. 307, Coop. Ext. Wk. in Agr. and Home Ec., W. Va. Univ., 1934.

¹⁰ W. D. Nichols, "A System for Scoring Kentucky Rural Communities," Cir. No. 188, Ext. Div., Coll. of Agr., Univ. of Ky., 1930.

¹¹ Beers, Williams, Page and Ensminger, *op. cit.*, pages 158-160.

lems, as was done in connection with land use planning activities, then the help of governmental and other service agencies should be sought and can be secured for getting at the solution to many of the problems.

The making of opinion surveys has been suggested as a simple way to get at needs as a basis for program planning for meetings and for the development of an organization. In Iowa interest-finding check sheets are made up and are placed in the hands of the people to give them a chance to indicate preferences on alternative proposals to meet needs. The check list is based upon suggestions made by local or county leader or planning conferences and include items or projects which are parts of county or state programs of the organization or of service agencies such as the Extension Service.¹²

Community-wide opinion surveys can be carried on to find out from the people what they think should be done to make the community a better place in which to live. Such surveys are a good guide for the building of programs for almost any organization serving farm and rural people. One possible procedure is to first organize a community council in order to get the various interests of the community represented and to stimulate interest on the part of all groups in the community. The next step is to get the facts, some of which can come from records already available and part from simple questions which can be sent to the people of the community. The questions can be framed to get reaction to the present needs, the difficulties to be overcome, and the suggestions for improvement. Special committees will then need to be set up to analyze the answers and work out ways of developing plans of action.¹³ Once these natural groups were located, their leaders could consider specific problems, (for example, credit needs, rural recreation, relief problems, better use of land, adoption of better farm and home practices) and secure the help of governmental and other agencies in best position to help meet these needs.

¹² W. H. Stacy, "Rural Organization Guides." Ames: Iowa State College Extension Service, 1946.

¹³ "Your Community—Which Way?" Bloomington: The Daily Pantagraph, 1946.

Methods of Promotion

Once started, what keeps an organization alive? It is not enough to create a recognition of need and realization that organization can help meet that need. Once the felt need of the individual is met and he finds no further need for the organization, interest in the organization may wane or it may die out entirely. The organization must be kept alive to the needs of its present and prospective members; and they must be kept aware that it is essential not only for meeting old needs, but of being able to meet new needs as well.

1. VOLUNTARY MEANS OF SERVICING MEMBERS.

a. *Developing an effective program.* The program of the organization is the chief means of meeting the needs of its members. "Organizations accomplish things in two ways: through meetings and through other activities. The latter might be called projects. The two together constitute the program of the organization. Some organizations . . . often put almost the entire emphasis on meetings while others stress the projects."¹⁴ In other words, everything an organization tries to do for its members may be considered the things constituting its program.

The programs of the Grange, the Farm Bureau or the Farmer's Union, for example, have been outlined in previous chapters. It is on the basis of these programs as well as the programs planned for regular or special meetings upon which membership is maintained. The primary task in the promotion of any organization is, therefore, the development of a program vital to the interests and based on the needs of the members.

Program planning and development may be conceived of in terms of individual members, of the local groups, of the county, state or the national organization. The test of any program is the appeal it will make to the average individual for whom the program is meant. Effective program planning must recognize the importance (1) of determining the needs of the individual member or potential member, (2) of securing his help in making program

¹⁴ J. H. Kolb, and A. F. Wileden, "Making Rural Organizations Effective," Bulletin 403, Agr. Exp. Sta., Univ. of Wis., 1928.

plans, and (3) of making the program function to meet the needs of the average member. This is true whether the organization be a local, independent group or a widespread system integrating local, county, state or national units.

This process of determining membership needs, securing the help of members in determining the nature of the program, and taking the program to every member is illustrated by the operation of the Grange. The program of the National Grange, as set forth in its resolutions each year, is built largely from resolutions submitted by individual members, subordinate, Pomona or state granges. The resolutions once formulated are carried into the programs of all the granges, state, county and local.¹⁵

b. *The Individual Service Approach.* Programs of organizations can be planned so as to appeal to the material or selfish interests of the individual alone. Such program planning requires a constant sales campaign to convince the individual that the service of the organization is of more value to him than any other type of service. As long as the individual feels he is getting full value for what he is "purchasing" from the organization through his membership fee, he will probably continue to pay dues.

The individual service program requires not only keeping the customer sold on the program, but assumes that the program will be made available to the member in such a fashion that he can use it and see its value. If some other service superior or more economical than the one offered by the organization is offered the individual, or if he thinks this is so, he will, not having other loyalties to the organization, drop his membership to take advantage of this, to him, better service. Rural organizations which depend primarily on economic service for holding membership must therefore be prepared to meet the competition of other economic enterprises which may be in a position to challenge the quality or economy of its services.

An organization which depends primarily on the quality of individual services must, moreover, have a system of financing to

¹⁵ The "Journal of Proceedings, Diamond Jubilee Session, National Grange," Worcester, Mass., 1941, pages 155 to 172.

provide enough funds to carry an adequate force of professional organizers. Some organizations, such as the Farm Bureau in Illinois, make membership dues sufficiently high so that funds are available for promotion. Membership dues in Illinois are \$15.00 per year, \$4.50 of which goes to the state association and 50 cents to the national. An adequately financed organization may find it possible not only to maintain an adequate professional membership sales staff, but also to have funds for the promotion of services, cooperative and otherwise, which will provide members enough savings so that those who use the services will gain several times over the cost of the memberships.

c. Providing services through local groups. Organizations may make programs available, also, through group methods. Where group influences are brought to bear on an individual other reasons than desire for economic gain may influence his appraisal of the value of the organization. Other individual appeals may be for protection, security, pride, power, comfort, pleasure, ideals, affection; add to these such social ideals as desire for new experience, response, recognition or for cooperation and the importance of working in groups comes into prominence. Few of these desires may be realized by an individual by having only a service relationship to his organization.

The group method can combine the advantages of providing individual service and opportunities for experience in group life. Some farm organizations, such as the Grange, Farmers' Union and certain state Farm Bureaus recognize this principle; others feel that the mass of members belong to the organization to secure its economic advantages and prefer to seek their group experiences in other types of organizations. A good combination of individual service and group service methods should make for greater strength in an organization than can come out of the use of only one of these methods. A brief examination of the ways in which a local group can serve individual desires will illustrate this point.

(1) The desire for protection and security. The individual service method which emphasizes economic improvement lays stress upon providing greater economic security for farm people.

Most of the emphasis in national and state programs of all great farm organizations—efforts to secure higher prices, lower taxes, better credit, lower marketing costs, etc., are in this direction. It is possible for an organization, through its professional and voluntary leaders, to work for these things for the average member without much effort from him except to continue to pay dues.

Local groups, on the other hand, can be of value in such a program (1) by keeping the members informed first hand of the efforts of the organization to secure these advantages, (2) by educating the members as to how they may secure the benefits of the programs actually accomplished, and (3) by giving the member a voice in the management of the organization. Participation in local group activities or merely being a member of a like-minded group provides an added and different sense of security, moreover, the security that comes from being a member of a group which in an emergency can come to the aid of the individual member.

(2) The desire for pride and power. Membership in a group which accomplishes things carries with it a sense of pride on the part of the individual; if he has had a part in the program leading to those accomplishments he not only may have a justifiable sense of pride but he may experience a sense of power which comes out of group effort and which cannot be experienced by the individual working alone. In organizations lacking the local group some of the leadership, working in county, state or national groups, gain this sense or pride and power; but the feeling may be only derived or not felt at all by the mass of members who do not have the group experience.

(3) The desire for comfort and pleasure. All individuals seek comfort and pleasure. Comfort in a physical sense can come as a result of economic advancement, and economic advancement may provide opportunities for seeking pleasure. Farmers organizations which can demonstrate that, through their efforts, their members attain greater comforts and more pleasures, gain strength thereby, especially if their members recognize that these added advantages have come through the organization. The functional local group can keep its members aware of improvements of this nature due

to the work of the organization, thus bolstering other types of efforts to keep members informed. But the local groups can also provide comforts and pleasures of another sort: the comforts of association with one's kind and the pleasures one gains out of such association. The values of social activities as means of breaking down social barriers cannot be overemphasized.

(4) The building of ideals and affection. The most effective means of building ideals and developing affections is in the local group which provides frequent face-to-face contacts. Meeting in groups not only provides the opportunity to develop ideals of service and create affection for one's fellows; it provides the opportunity for the development of loyalties to these ideals. In areas in which such loyalties have been developed an organization does not need to put on membership drives; the local group provides the medium for maintaining membership and for recruiting new memberships.

(5) The desire for new experience. The organization providing only individual service for the average member fails to open the way for new experience, for participation in group activities is a new experience for many people. The way is open to the members in the local group not only to take leadership in his own group; but because of experience gained there he may be selected for leadership in larger fields. A mistake often made, however, is that leadership or participation in the local group is of minor importance; it can be basic to the effective functioning of the entire organization.

(6) The desire for response and recognition. The normal mode of life is group life. Life in a group carries with it the desire for response to efforts made in the interest of the group. New ideas of value to the entire group may and frequently do originate in the minds of the members of the local group. If the idea can be tested there, and if it receives a favorable response it can be carried to the larger group. This is the essence of the democratic process in the formulation of policies and should be cherished and nurtured in a world where counter measures are being imposed on people.

The desire for recognition comes naturally out of the desire for response. Those who propose new ways of doing things, especially

if their ideas are accepted, naturally wish to be recognized for their efforts. Though it is desirable to create the attitude that one should not care who gets the credit for good work done, yet those who recognize good work can do much to encourage it by recognizing the individual or groups responsible for it.

(7) The desire for cooperation. The history of farmers' organizations is ripe with examples of cooperative efforts growing out of the meetings of farmers' clubs, granges, farm bureau units and farmers' union locals. Merely meeting together seems to have led naturally to cooperative efforts; thus one is led to believe that the desire to cooperate is one of the basic desires of rural people. Cooperation may have other objectives, of course, than for economic advancement; the experience in local group organization, therefore, is valuable, though not essential to successful cooperation. Cooperation bolstered by experience in local group activities is likely to be more successful than if it is carried on without them. Hence many cooperatives are now developing local groups, not only as educational agencies for the program of the cooperative, but also as a means of binding the members of the cooperative closer together.

Organizations making use of the local group organization method of promotion may operate with smaller membership dues than those using the individual service plan. Participation in the local group activities is, on the one hand, compensatory for dues, for the member may count his helping the organization by taking leadership in it a real cost to him. Usually, however, taking part in the activities of the group is an advantage to the individual for the experience and training he gets very often proves invaluable to him.

A combination of the individual service method of promotion and the effective use of the local group previously stressed, has led, in notable instances, to a stronger and more stable organization, especially if the benefits from individual services do not overshadow the values secured through group participation in the mind of the average member.

2. PROMOTION BY COERCION. Most rural organizations depend upon the voluntary acts of the individual, prompted by methods of

stimulation and promotion mentioned above, to secure membership. Several types of compulsion have developed in recent years, however, which must be recognized as methods of promoting organized efforts.

a. *Compulsion by the majority.* Farmers in the United States early in the 20th century had tried methods of compulsion in securing membership participation. The Black Patch and Burley Tobacco campaigns were of this nature; growers, desiring a monopoly control of the product in order to keep it off the market and thus force higher prices, used drastic methods—intimidation and even bodily harm—to keep growers in line. During the recent depression similar tactics were used in various types of farm strikes.

Majority rule to secure participation is used, also, in present-day government direct-action agencies. In soil conservation districts when two-thirds of the landowners vote to carry on a specified soil practice the other one-third can be forced to comply. In connection with marketing quota referenda under the Production and Marketing Administration, the same method is used.

Coercion of non-conformers, where a two-thirds or even simple majority has power given to it under the law, is a fairly well established procedure in the United States and is being extended to land use and even marketing fields. Where no legal basis is provided such coercion to secure participation may and often is followed by violence except where the group is sufficiently well integrated that the minority group knows it has no chance. In a democratic society the minority always has recourse through the vote; they can always work for a majority.

b. *Controlled membership.* It is conceivable that, within occupational groups, membership in an organization is a condition permitting one's entry into the occupation. Such control is exercised by labor unions, especially in certain skilled trades in which most of the workers are members. Little such control has been exercised in Agriculture, though the attempt was made in connection with farm labor organization in California; there skilled workers in some of the fruit industries endeavored to form closed unions and force all who entered the trade to become members.

This method of control makes possible relatively high assessments. In return for the high dues the members are assured of relative security in employment, some insurance against unemployment, and in some cases assurance of employment in other jobs if the worker loses the present job.

c. *Limitation of methods of coercion and control.* Promotion by coercion in any form smacks of bureaucracy; it tends to thwart the operation of true democratic processes. It may be justified in some situations, especially those in which the majority exercise control but the minority are given the right of free expression. The usual methods of promotion by voluntary methods using inducements to individuals or groups to participate on the basis of recognized needs which can be met by voluntary organization is the truly democratic method. It is the method which should flourish in a democracy in which freedom of opportunity to the individual for economic and social advancement is guaranteed by government.

The Steps in Getting an Organization Started

In general, the process of stimulation and promotion may proceed through four steps, according to Sanderson and Polson: Their analysis provides an excellent summary for this chapter. They state that "The first problem, after an analysis or diagnosis of the community, is to discover the dynamics which may arouse a sense of need. If there is complete satisfaction with the existing situation, there is no incentive to community improvement."¹⁶ The four steps in the process, adapted to the problems of organization, are:

1. *Disorganization.* A realization among some of the people that something new is needed to meet the needs; that the people do not now have the kind of organization with which to meet these needs.

2. *Competition.* A sense that other forces are destroying or threatening to destroy present values or the opportunity to get a solution to pressing problems.

¹⁶ Sanderson and Polson, *op. cit.*, page 220.

3. *Imitation.* Observation of how efforts in other areas can help solve problems leading to activity in the local community.

4. *Stimulation.* The encouragement by local leaders or by outsiders, for local groups to form an organization.

5. *Motivation.* Actually getting work started and keeping it going.

Most organizations are formed on the basis of these five steps. Not all methods are successful and none of them are always successful. There are many social and economic forces which affect membership and participation. Some of these forces are analyzed in the next chapter.

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What part did previous experience and pressure of economic and social need play in getting early farmers organizations started?
2. What is the one essential before an organization can be started?
3. How are organizations started through recognition of mutual interest? What will be necessary if they are to continue to function?
4. What part can local leaders play in getting an organization started?
5. What is the system used by the Grange to organize new granges?

6. What are the steps in a membership campaign as carried on by the Farm Bureau?
7. Compare the Illinois and North Dakota suggestions for experimentation to develop a sense of needs and stimulate interest.
8. What is the essence of the score card system in developing a recognition of needs?
9. What part does the survey method have in getting farm people to realize their common needs?
10. What should be included in a discussion of what constitutes the program of an organization?
11. What factors must be considered in planning an effective program?
12. What are the advantages and the limitations of the individual service method in planning programs?
13. What are the elements necessary in successfully planning for individual service?
14. What are the appeals which can be made through the group approach?
15. Translate into your own experience what a group can do to satisfy these desires.
16. What methods of promotion can be developed which use some form of coercion? Which forms do you think justifiable and under what circumstances?

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Study the Annual Reports of the Grange, the Farm Bureau and the Farmers Union to find evidences of methods used in getting new members or new organizations.
2. Compare the pattern for experimentation developed in Iowa or Ohio with that suggested by Arvold. How do they agree; in what ways do they differ in their methods of stimulating a sense of need for local organization.
3. Discuss the relative merits of the membership campaign, the score-card system and the survey as a means of stimulating a sense of need for organization.
4. Study the "road on organization travels" in Bulletin 403 by Kolb and Wileden and compare the trend shown in the chart with trends of membership in the farmers' organization you know best. What were the influences bearing upon the period of stimulation and promotion of this organization?
5. Study the methods of promotion used by rural organizations you know best to determine the most successful methods.

EXERCISE

Study a typical organization in your own community. What were the methods of promotion being carried on in it? How effective are they; which methods seem to be the most effective?

CHAPTER XXI

FORCES AFFECTING PARTICIPATION

Rural organizations are selective; not everyone joins or takes part no matter how intensive the promotional work has been. Some organizations are set up to be selective; most farm organizations are selective. The Grange has its secrecy and ritual which keeps some people out. The Farm Bureau may have its dues too high so that some farmers won't join. The Farmers' Union closes its doors to certain classes of people in the rural community. Thus the selectivity system of the organization itself has something to do with who become members and take part.

Social and Economic Conditions Affecting Participation

What percentage of the farmers belong to organizations? To what organizations do they belong? What type of farmers belong? A number of studies have been made in various parts of the country which help to answer these questions. They show that from one-half to three-fourths of farmers belong to one or more organizations. The church in rural areas attracts the most members. Of all heads (operators and homemakers) of farm families in four townships in Illinois, about half were church members.¹ In four counties of New York, one-half of 2,925 farmers belonged to the church.² In a Virginia community four-fifths of 277 families were church members.³ The next most important organization for Illinois farm families was the farm bureau and the home bureau, one-fourth of the heads belonging to one or the other. In New York the Grange was next to the church, one-third of the farmers being members. The Dairyman's League, with 25% of the farmers as members, and the farm bureau, with 21% as members,

¹ D. E. Lindstrom, "Forces Affecting Participation of Farm People in Rural Organization," Bull. 423, Univ. of Ill. Agr. Exp. Sta., 1933, page 103.

² W. A. Anderson, "Membership of Farmers in New York Organizations," Bull. 695, Cornell Univ. Agr. Exp. Sta., 1937, page 6.

³ Allen D. Edwards, "Beaverdam: A Rural Community in Transition." Blacksburg: Bull. 340, Va. Agr. Exp. Sta., 1942.

ranked third and fourth. In one township in Illinois the farm bureau had more members than did the church in 1940.⁴ In a New Hampshire rural community the Grange was the dominant organization, being the only one regularly attended by a considerable number of people, men as well as women.⁵

1. FARM TENURE AND MEMBERSHIP. The Illinois study showed percentages of owners, tenants, and farm laborers who served as officers, committeemen, or board members in organizations, who paid dues and took part on programs. Three-fourths of the owners and tenants related to owners took part in organizations; seventy per cent of the unrelated tenants participated; only 30 per cent of the farm laborers took part in any way in any organization.⁶ The New York study showed the same tendency: "owner-operators belonged to an average of 1.9 organizations; renter operators belonged to 1.3 organizations. The difference is emphasized by the fact that 17 per cent of the owners belonged to no organizations, while twice as large a proportion of the renter-operators, or 33 per cent, belonged to no organization."⁷ In the Virginia community a fourth more owners belonged to organizations than did tenants.⁸ A later study in New York revealed that more than twice as many of the tenant families and more than six times as many of the farm laborer families as the owner families were *not* affiliated with any organization.⁹

2. STABILITY OF LOCATION. Most of the studies showed, also, that those who remain in the community over a period of years exhibit much greater interest and participate more freely in rural organizations than do those who move every two or three years. Farmers who remained on the same farm all of their lifetimes took

⁴ Unpublished study by the author.

⁵ Kenneth MacLeisch and Kimball Young, "Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community." Washington: Rural Life Studies 3, BAE, USDA, 1942, page 75.

⁶ Lindstrom, *op. cit.*, pages 109-110.

⁷ Anderson, *op. cit.*, page 13.

⁸ Edwards, *op. cit.*

⁹ W. A. Anderson and Hans H. Plambeck, "The Social Participation of Farm Families." Ithaca: Mimeo. Bull. No. 8, Cornell Univ. Agr. Exp. Sta., 1943, pages 1710-7.

part in the largest number of organizations; in New York 88 per cent of those who belonged to six or more organizations had operated but one farm in their lifetimes.¹⁰

3. EFFECT OF FORMAL SCHOOLING. Farm people who are privileged to advance in school participate more in rural organizations: ninety per cent of the high school graduates in Illinois took an active part in the organizations of which they were members; only 60 per cent of those with less than an eighth grade education took part.¹¹ In New York the farmers with the best schooling not only belong to the largest number of organizations, but larger proportions of the better-schooled belong to each of the organizations than in the general distribution of all the operators classified by schooling.

4. AGE AND FARMING EXPERIENCE. Though there is a relation between age and experience, "neither shows important relation to the number of organizations to which farm operators belong after they reach 30 years of age . . . the youngest operators are just getting established and time is required for them to enter organizational activities; also, they are overlooked by the older men in organizations. A larger proportion might join if they were invited."¹²

5. TRIPS TAKEN AWAY FROM HOME. The popular notion that participation in organizations increases materially the number of trips that farmers take away from home was not found to be true by the Illinois study. While many of the trips taken by persons who are officers or members of organizations may be taken in the interest of such organizations, the evidence was that such trips substituted for other trips; as many trips were taken by those who belonged to no organizations as by those who were officers, committeemen, or members.¹³

6. SCHOOL, FAMILY LIFE, AND OTHER FACTORS. Other social and economic factors are obviously associated with participation in

¹⁰ Anderson, *op. cit.*, page 15.

¹¹ Lindstrom, *op. cit.*, page 110.

¹² Anderson, *op. cit.*, page 14.

¹³ Lindstrom, *op. cit.*, page 111.

rural organizations. Not only do the more stable, especially among owners and some tenants, who have better schooling participate more; those with a good type of family life make the best members. A study of participation of farm people in land-use planning work in Garrard county, Kentucky, shows that committee households are less often composed of broken families, childless couples or single individuals. They take part more in social organization and show greater leadership activity. They are more successful in accumulating land.¹⁴

The New York study as summarized shows that "the characteristics that are likely to distinguish those farm operators who belong to social organizations from those who belong to none or only one are: ownership of the farm operated rather than rental; operating of a larger farm rather than a smaller one; operating a farm with higher assessed valuation value rather than one of lower value; stability in residence rather than frequent shifting; and better schooling. . . . Members of the farm bureau are more likely to be members of other organizations than are the members of any other organization. Members of the church are, in the main, the least likely to belong to other organizations."¹⁵

7. REASONS GIVEN FOR MEMBERSHIP. Why do rural people become members of various types of organizations? The Illinois study secured expressions from members of various organizations as to reasons for belonging, recognizing that not all reasons were given.¹⁶ Most members of churches belonged because they were brought up to feel they should; some desired religious teachings; others to obtain moral stimulation to bear their economic and social burdens with greater fortitude. Other reasons given were to help the church, because others do, and for social enjoyment.

Reasons given for belonging to farm bureau, home bureau and similar organizations were somewhat different from the above: most belonged in order to secure the information, benefits and

¹⁴ Howard Beers, *et al.*, "Community Land-Use Planning Committees." Lexington: Bull. 417, Agr. Exp. Sta., Univ. of Ky., pages 186-187.

¹⁵ Anderson, *op. cit.*, page 26.

¹⁶ Lindstrom, *op. cit.*, pages 112 to 114.

services the organizations offered; a third said they were members because they thought that farmers should learn the importance of organization and that they should help the cause of farmer's organizations. A few stated they belonged in order that they might help others.

Social clubs and lodges attracted members because they offered the opportunity for social enjoyment—the opportunity to visit with neighbors, friends and companions, and to meet new people. A few said they belonged to social clubs and lodges to obtain recreation and amusement, to secure insurance benefits and to have an opportunity for self-expression.

8. RELATION OF MEMBERSHIP TO ATTITUDE. The attitude of any person toward an organization is largely determined by his experience in or knowledge of it. In the Illinois study more than 97 per cent of those having favorable attitudes toward such organizations as the farm bureau and home bureau belonged to one or more organizations; over half of those having unfavorable attitudes belonged to no organization.¹⁷ In the Kentucky study, participation and favorable attitudes were associated. This study showed that continued participation increased interest; that an adequate understanding of the work of the organization leads to constructive attitudes, whereas lack of understanding may lead to actual non-participation.¹⁸ This argues for a system of organization which makes member as well as non-member participation possible.

9. REASONS GIVEN FOR NON-MEMBERSHIP. Those who did not belong to these organizations, according to the Illinois study, did not like the management or leadership; they felt themselves treated unfairly; or they failed to secure benefits from the organization which they were led to believe they would get. A few thought that there were too many organizations; some felt that certain organizations caused factions in the community and that some organizations had outlived their usefulness.

10. THE EFFECT OF CONFLICT. Most of the reasons given for not being members reflect a conflict situation. Unless an individual

¹⁷ Lindstrom, *op. cit.*, page 115.

¹⁸ Beers, *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, pages 194 to 195.

is completely satisfied with his situation, he is either willing to listen to arguments for his joining the organization or refuses to listen because of some conflicting issue in his mind.

Some of the conflicts arising to deter participation in organizations are personality conflicts; others are challenges to personal or group security; and some come out of action which calls forth retaliatory individual or group action.¹⁹

a. *Personality conflicts.* Two leaders may differ on an issue, and though the issue may be insignificant, the personalities may be such that neither will give in to or compromise with the other. The result often is the development of a following for each leader with resulting clashes or a continued rift in the community. Differences between farmers organizations can frequently be traced to differences between individual leaders; each may have developed a scheme for attaining a desired end; the end product may be the same; but because the leaders do not agree on the method they often do not attain the end because they divide their followers and weaken their causes. Leaders of one faction often find it difficult, if not impossible, to gain support in an area where sentiment favors the leader of the second faction.

b. *Challenge to personal or group security.* An organization or movement which has run its course should be allowed to die without disturbance. If the leadership or motive of the movement is challenged or attacked it may take on new life and prevent a new movement coming in to take its place. Moreover, when an individual or group which has a sense of security is challenged by a new movement, the result is likely to be a conflict of the old against the new. A concrete example is the persistence of support for the one-room school, especially where outsiders try to come in to the community to encourage reorganization.

c. *Action calling for retaliatory action.*²⁰ Not unlike the reaction to challenge is retaliatory action against action already taken. "Failure to confer with various groups and leaders concerned may

¹⁹ Sanderson and Polson, *op. cit.*, pages 318-323. The following digest comes from the excellent analysis by these authors.

²⁰ Briefed from Sanderson and Polson, *op. cit.*, Chap. X.

lead to serious conflict." The handing down of cut and dried programs by officers or officials often initiates conflicts. Action taken which leads to suspicion of favoritism or deceit is frequently followed by conflict. Social pressure, unwisely used, assuming an attitude of superiority or authority on the issue, forcing a vote, obtaining a legal decision in favor of the action taken, using propaganda to bring pressure to bear on the opposition, are types of action almost sure to lead to deep-seated resentment and ultimate, if not immediate open conflict. Stifling opposition, rather than securing understanding, taking the form of denying opportunity for discussion, appealing for loyalty to the group, threatening a person's job unless he acquiesces, appealing to conflicting personal interests—all of these are poor techniques when applied to rural organizations.

So often the issue out of which the conflict grew is not the real cause of the conflict; or it may be only the opening wedge for a widening breach due to a series of conflicts. In some cases substitute issues are created to cause confusion or cover insufficient support for a measure. Then, leaders or organizations attempting to usurp the field of action precipitate issues that would not otherwise appear.

Retaliatory action coming out of interference from outsiders, "unwise suggestions or regulations from supervisors or local professional leaders, state officials, officers of state or national organizations often plunge local groups into conflict. Control of local groups from without can be exceedingly destructive as well as constructive."²¹

d. *Overcoming conflict.* Before a plan of organization can proceed or a group or individual be led to participate the causes of conflicts and their effects must be rooted out insofar as possible. The principle of minimizing differences and emphasizing points in common may lead to this end, especially if those previously in conflict become more zealous for the common ends to be attained than they were for the issues over which they were in conflict. If

²¹ Sanderson and Polson, *op. cit.*, pages 325-326.

all factions can find greater satisfaction out of the common approach than they had while in conflict they are likely to continue to work together. Such techniques as ignoring the issue causing the conflict, emphasizing the inevitability of change, presenting facts from surveys to picture the true situation²² will all help if the new common purposes can be made more important in the eyes of the conflicting factions than the previous issues.

Interests can be integrated; the desirable thing is to place emphasis upon rational long-time improvement. Farmers' organizations, when faced with the necessity, have found it possible to work together upon major issues, such as securing a Farm Program in the 1933 depression. They have all kept together on the essentials of that farm program. Primary emphasis should be upon such and to work together for a long-time plan, a plan which will meet war needs, after-war needs, needs of depression times as well as times of relative prosperity; this need not deprive any of the organizations of their prestige. To place primary emphasis upon methods to attain these ends—methods which are different with each organization—rather than on the ends themselves—as a means of maintaining status may be disastrous, not only to the organizations, but to the cause of agriculture as a whole.

Leadership in Rural Organizations²³

Who are the leaders in rural organizations? How are they developed? What does it take to be a leader? The idea that not everyone can be a leader, that only a few who have certain abilities can be leaders, is open to question. Leadership must be thought of not as a thing in itself but in relation to the situation in which it operates. "When farmers' choices are uncontrolled they tend toward specialization leadership by problem to be attacked."²⁴

²² *Ibid.*, pages 327-328.

²³ This section is based largely on Sanderson's excellent analysis "Leadership for Rural Life," Association Press, 1940.

²⁴ Bryce Ryan, "Social and Ecological Patterns in the Farm Leadership of Four Iowa Counties." Ames: Res. Bull. 306, Agr. Exp. Sta., Iowa State College, 1942.

1. **LEADERSHIP BY PRECEPT.** If one thinks of a leader as one who may, therefore, develop a pattern for others to follow, then many people can become leaders. This is the concept of leadership which has developed in connection with Extension work. A certain farmer may be willing to have a demonstration carried out on his farm. In connection with carrying it out he provides a pattern for use by his neighbors in carrying on the same practice on their farms. If one holds to this concept of leadership the problem becomes one of creating an interest in a new practice and then training the individual in the skills necessary to carry on that practice. The influence of such leadership cannot be underestimated, for one who commands respect for his ability to solve a problem will be imitated by others who have similar problems. Having attained this type of leadership an individual may be called upon to assume leadership in other ways.

Farmer demonstrators, however, must be more than just demonstrators. Whereas the most effective demonstration is in the demonstrator's own neighborhood, the best demonstrator is one who is respected by his neighbors; one who is visited, conferred with and deferred to. He is the "natural" leader; he may hold no position, but he is looked up to and followed by his neighbors.²⁵

2. **LEADERSHIP IN A GROUP.** Rural organizations, by their very nature, demand more than leadership in a skill or practice; they require what is known as group leadership, which may be direct leadership of a group such as in a farmer's club, or leadership by representation as on a board of directors. Group leadership must be such as to influence others to cooperate in attaining a common purpose or goal.²⁶ It has been defined in a Michigan study as "that unique relationship which exists in a group when the process of

²⁵L. W. Coleman, "Some Aspects of Human Relations in Soil Conservation." Washington: Unpublished study made under the auspices of the Soil Conservation Service, Extension Service and BAE in Stephenson County, Illinois, 1946. See also Saul D. Olinsky, "Reveille for Radicals." Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1946, page 5. Here is given a definition of natural or native leaders and their importance.

²⁶Ordway Tead, "The Art of Leadership," New York: McGraw-Hill, 1935, page 20.

mutual stimulation makes it possible for one person to influence others in the pursuit of a common cause."²⁷

Leadership in rural organizations may develop (1) because a situation arises demanding group action, and someone who sees the issues more clearly than the average takes the initiative in getting the group started; (2) by reason of the fact that a group needs a leader to carry on its function and hence selects some one to take leadership. Many of the leaders of farmers' organizations, such as O. H. Kelly of the Grange, Newt Gresham of the Farmers' Union and John Howard of the Farm Bureau were of the initiator type. They were able to sense a felt need, define the difficulty, suggest a solution and work toward action on meeting the need.²⁸

Leaders coming out of the group are the most numerous type; it is in connection with this type of leadership that the problems of selection and training are most important.

When leaders are chosen by the group there is always danger of the wrong person being chosen. Many rural organizations become inactive because the leaders chosen fail to carry out the ordinary duties expected of them as leaders. This is felt most keenly when persons are chosen for direct leadership and fail to function, such as to take the initiative in planning programs or calling meetings, than for representative leadership, in which case other members of the representative body can take the leadership and the misfit leader remains merely a nominal leader. In electing township representatives to county farm bureau boards, for example, the person selected may do no more than attend regular board meetings and vote on issues when necessary; he need do nothing in such a case to offer leadership for the membership in his own township.

Thus leadership selection becomes an important matter: where well done the group is likely to prosper; where poorly done the group is almost sure to suffer.

²⁷ C. R. Hoffer, and D. L. Gibson, "The Community Situation as it Affects Agricultural Extension Work," Spec. 312, Mich. State Coll. Agr. Exp. Sta., 1941, page 9.

²⁸ Sanderson and Polson, *op. cit.*, page 363.

a. *Qualities sought for in rural group leaders.* Those who are selected as leaders must have certain qualities if they are to function effectively as leaders. Though there may be certain basic qualities essential to leadership, it must be recognized that each type of activity demands a set of qualities which may not be demanded by other activities. Nevertheless, rural groups demand certain basic qualities within leaders.

"In a study of personality characteristics of county agricultural agents Director H. C. Ramsower found that 'integrity, perseverance, faith, ability to plan, vision, initiative and courage' were the characteristics in which the most successful agents ranked highest, while 'enthusiasm, vision, ability to plan, and initiative' were the qualities in which the poorest agents ranked lowest."²⁹ The qualities sought most frequently by farmers in their leaders, according to the Illinois study,³⁰ are honesty, faithfulness, willingness to take responsibility, ability to carry things through, friendliness, courage and cooperativeness. The ten qualities most markedly distinguishing the good leaders from the poor leaders were broadmindedness, influence in the community, willingness to learn, conservatism, public spiritedness, cooperativeness, patience, tolerance, unselfishness and ability to speak in public. Many of these are qualities that are developed by social contacts and the experience of working with people.

b. *Leadership selection.* In a democratic society leaders are supposedly selected by popular choice from the group. The exercise of the right to choose has freed modern rural life of some of the old-type leadership which maintained itself by economic or social prestige. "As an increasing number of voluntary associations develop with the advent of modern political and economic democracy, the official leaders of these groups are chosen more for their efficiency and with more deliberation and control by the group. Indeed, the device of annual election of officers is merely one whereby the group may retain control of its leadership and its policies."³¹

²⁹ Lindstrom, *op. cit.*, page 120.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Sanderson, *op. cit.*, page 63.

The technique employed by most rural organizations in selecting their leaders is to resort to usual methods: the appointment of a nominating committee, making nominations from the floor, or using the Australian ballot system whereby every member is privileged to make a nomination. The method of having a nominating committee makes possible more deliberation in the selection of the leaders best qualified to serve. It also gives opportunity for interviews with those thought qualified for leadership. Making nominations from the floor is usually a makeshift method except where it is used in connection with nominations made by a nominating committee; thus absolute control of leadership selection can be prevented. The Australian ballot system is worthy because it places each individual in a position to suggest the leader of his choice. It is the most democratic method. It is most successful where officers are nominated in one meeting and elected in the next.

c. *Processes in leadership selection.* Processes accompanying the mechanics of leadership selection explain how persons become leaders. As has been pointed out, leaders develop because (1) they initiate a movement and attract a following, (2) they are selected by a group after it has been formed and (3) they are selected for specific jobs by leaders already in office.³²

(1) Satisfaction of personal need. Persons who are stimulated to leadership may be so because they see the opportunity to satisfy some personal need through group action and may find satisfaction in sharing the results of such action with others. This is probably the most potent force for the original development of leadership and it carries over into a feeling of pride in accomplishment and a loyalty to a method of getting a thing done.

(2) Interest in group welfare. Some are aroused to take leadership because of an interest in some group's welfare. Many 4H club leaders, for example, volunteer as leaders because they want to help the youth in the community form a club. In many cases the leader may have no eligible children of his own, but he gets joy out of seeing the youth engaged in some constructive activity. This

³² See Sanderson, *op. cit.*, pages 69-76.

type of person becomes a very valuable type of leader in rural life because of his interest in the welfare of others.

(3) Recognition of personal worth. Persons selected for leadership by a group have usually had some group following. This following usually develops because the person had previously expressed interest in and taken active part in the work of the group. The quality of the work done usually is such that the group develops confidence in the leader. In some cases, of course, the leader is chosen by a sub-group or faction with a special interest. Then competition develops and conflict may arise possibly resulting in a split in the group. Such can be avoided in groups taught to observe the democratic principle: to accept the leader selected by the majority.

d. *Methods of finding new leaders.* New people must often be induced to take leadership. In local groups the wise method is to work out a system of organization giving new people opportunities for minor leadership and thus build up confidence in themselves. To plunge an untrained person into a position of major leadership may be disastrous both for the leader and the organization. Techniques for enlisting new people for group jobs, include (1) "getting their ideas, desires and interests through conversation, by observing their behavior and attitudes, and by consulting others about them."³³ . . . (2) by infusing loyalty and enthusiasm for the work of the organization into the new people. . . . (3) by knowing the jobs to be done and the satisfactions to be derived from doing them and creating in new people a desire to do them, (4) by giving the new persons specific information as to how the job may be done, citing sources of help including persons and literature, (5) by having faith in the new persons sufficiently so that confidence can be instilled in them and (6) by making the first and subsequent approaches tactfully, seeking friends of the new people who will help encourage them.

3. THE FUNCTIONS OF A LEADER. Many leaders learn by experience what they must do to get a job done. This is especially

³³ *Ibid.*, pages 76-79.

true of leaders who have seen a need and have set about to develop a following to meet that need. Leaders who are selected by a group may have defined for them specifically what they are expected to do; usually, however, this is not the case. Most leaders selected by groups have leadership thrust upon them without too much knowledge or too clear a conception of what they are to do. The jobs into which leaders of rural organizations are thrust are so varied that only general principles can be stated as to their functions. We are indebted to Dwight Sanderson for such an analysis.²⁴ He has outlined six functions for the group leader as follows:

"a. *He is a group spokesman.* If the group is to have relations with other groups, someone must be able to state the group's opinion. The group cannot function without a voice, and, if all members attempt to speak for it, only confusion results. Hence, groups delegate their leaders to speak for them.

"b. *He is the group harmonizer.* Every group is bound together by certain interests, while some of the members have different interests that tend to create conflict between them. The leader is successful insofar as he is able to magnify the common interests of the group so that each member represses his difference upon other subjects in allegiance to the accepted policies and activities of the group. The leader must be able to think with the group and yet maintain a certain independence of judgment so that he is not overruled by the dissension and personal interests of its members. He must be able to see their common interests so clearly that he can reveal them to the members and make them superior to their repressed interests. His functions as harmonizer and planner are thus interdependent.

"c. *He is a group planner.* He really leads only in so far as he is just a little ahead of the group in serving its needs and in planning ways of meeting them. The loyalty of the group depends very largely upon its confidence in his ability to originate the best plans for its welfare. This does not mean that the group should not plan for itself, but that it looks to the leaders for initiative in planning.

²⁴ Dwight Sanderson, "Leadership for Rural Life," Association Press, 1940, pages 31 to 34.

Indeed, the wisest leaders are those who encourage their groups to do their own planning through various committees and who themselves merely stimulate and guide the planning process. The group that depends on the leader for its plans will more quickly repudiate his leadership when they are unsuccessful, whereas if they themselves had made the plans, the leader need not fear all the onus of any failure.

"d. *He is the group executive.* (He is the) one who directs the carrying out of its policies and plans. . . . A good executive is one who can choose others to carry on the work, while he concerns himself with planning and policies. The best group leader will stimulate others to take minor tasks of leadership and thus accomplish the objectives of the group and promote its solidarity, and at the same time be developing leaders who can replace him.³⁵

"e. *He is the group educator.* As a group planner, he must get the group to see the solution of its problems; action cannot proceed successfully until they are convinced of the feasibility of the plans agreed upon. As educator, he must recognize the merits of whatever opposition there may be to his views (for usually there is some truth in any sincere opposition), and the factors involved must be reconciled before sufficient unanimity can be obtained. Successful group action cannot occur without a wholehearted belief in its desirability by a goodly majority of the group, and to achieve this may require a considerable period of educational discussion.

"This function of the leader is of particular importance with rural groups. The type of leadership that tries to 'put things over' is usually not acceptable to rural groups. They must be allowed to 'visit' and to think things over before arriving at a decision. The

³⁵ "The strongest group is one in which there are several potential leaders, each of whom is a leader for some particular phase of the group life and any one of whom might take the place of the recognized leader and successfully lead the group activities. The successful leader seeks to discover, enlist, and develop such leaders and give them the largest possible responsibility, in order that the future success of the group may be assured without his presence. Many an apparently successful leader seems to delight in trying to do the whole job himself; but his success is only superficial, for as soon as he leaves or is displaced the group is no stronger than it was before he assumed leadership." Page 39.

leader who attempts to 'rush' a decision may carry his point, but he may be surprised at the lack of support he subsequently receives in carrying it out.

"f. *He is a symbol of the group ideals.* He must, therefore, be loyal to those ideals in word and deed. This involves a primary loyalty to the interests of the group of which he is a leader. As soon as the group feels that the leader is really more interested in himself or in some other group, its confidence is shaken and his leadership wanes. This is particularly noticeable with professional leaders. The clergyman or school principal who is obviously using his present position merely as a means of obtaining a better one as soon as possible, soon loses the confidence of his people; for they very rightly feel that his attention should be on their needs, and they commence to desire someone who will devote himself wholeheartedly to their welfare."

4. LEADERSHIP TRAINING. The best training a leader can get is the experience with his own group. It may be that he started on the leadership role as one assigned a special duty in connection with some group activity. If he carries out this task at all well and shows himself not only willing but sincerely desirous of doing the job as well as he can, he is likely to be in line for more important leadership tasks. Very few leaders of rural organizations begin their leadership as officers; most start their experience in less conspicuous ways.³⁶

Opportunities for leadership training are varied and numerous. Most organizations provide their own system of leadership training. They provide literature, conferences, schools and give some supervision to leaders.³⁷ To avoid a type of inbred leadership, however, that is, leaders who have no other experience than that with the group itself, rural organizations are making increased use of the services of specialists, such as the rural organization leaders of Agricultural Extension Services; in some states regular county

³⁶ Lindstrom, *op. cit.*, pages 119-120.

³⁷ See, for example, the Official Manual of the Future Farmers of America; or the Ohio Farm Bureau Advisory Council Handbook; or similar manuals issued by the Grange, Farmers' Union and others.

leader training and program planning conferences are held for rural organization leaders. Manuals of a more general nature have been prepared by these specialists.³⁸

5. **REWARDS FOR LEADERSHIP.** Why are people willing to become leaders? In the average rural organization acceptance of leadership requires spending time which might be given to other things; it involves the chance to be misunderstood and possibly to make enemies; and it usually is doing things for others for which little thanks is too often given.

a. *Joy in accomplishment.* The greatest reward in leadership comes from seeing things accomplished for the good of the group. This good comes as well, of course, to the leader. But the peculiar satisfaction which the average leader gets is not only that he is better off, financially or otherwise, by group action, but that he, the leader, can take pride in the accomplishment.

b. *Personality development.* A second important result of leadership is its effect on the personality of the leader. Experience in leading a group may make a profound change in the person: where previously he was timid, unsure of himself in group situations and unaware of what confidence in him expressed by a group will do to him, after having taken leadership, he may become aware of his power of leadership, lose some of his feeling of timidity and self-consciousness and gain a feeling almost of awe at the treatment he is accorded by his group. Some people who take leadership become so impressed with the loyal responses of their group that they are constantly eager to serve them better and more effectively. Such leaders grow strong as leaders yet more sensitive to group needs and desires as the group grows into their loyalty and self respect.

c. *Recognition and appreciation of others.* "The appreciation of others, is what gives real significance and meaning to the service rendered, for the affection of others gives the deepest joy of life." The leader is a creator, which gives him the satisfaction of accomplishment and a feeling that "he is part of the life process and his

³⁸ Such material have been prepared by Extension Specialists in Rural Sociology in Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, and other states.

leadership makes life." In this way leadership makes for an expanded life both for the leader and the follower, "for while he has been enriching the lives of others, the leader has been enriching his own life."³⁹ Since the leader is constantly being judged by his group and by others, and because people trust him as their leader, he grows into something greater than just himself, interested in selfish ends. He finds he must have "personal integrity and a human sympathy which motivates his forgetfulness of self in his service to others."

6. VOLUNTARY VERSUS PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP. In the early development of farmers and rural organizations practically all of the leadership was of a voluntary nature; few of the leaders in the early organizations were paid for what they did. As movements grew a few leaders did get some compensation. Oliver Hudson Kelly of the Grange, for example, was allowed a salary and expenses in his travels to get Granges started, but the money was to come out of the results of his work. Even today, however, the bulk of the leadership, especially that functioning in the locality, is of the unpaid, voluntary type. Very few, if any, of the officers of subordinate granges, farm bureau units or farmers union locals receive pay. But for this array of voluntary leadership rural organizations would find it hard to provide the service for rural people.

With the growth and spread of rural organizations and institutions paid or professional leadership has grown. It has functioned and still continues to function in rural organizations in an advisory and administrative capacity. Many needed reforms come as results of professional leadership; this process should continue. The making of policies, however, is a proper function of and should remain in the hands of the voluntary leaders and the members of the organization.

The danger in professional leadership lies in its taking over too much the policy making function; when this happens the democratic process fades out and bureaucracy looms large in the picture. Another danger lurks in the exercise of too much initiative by the professional leader which may lead to the same end as that of taking

³⁹ Sanderson, *op. cit.*, pages 116 to 118.

over the policy making function. "The . . . leader's greatest temptation is to 'do' things for the (group), rather than create means whereby the (group) may do things for itself." To do so, not only "devitalizes the leader," but it "undermines" the group.⁴⁰ The professional leader is "a leader of leaders,"⁴¹ one who can leave a group richer for his having been in the group. The professional leader is essential to the democratic way in the degree to which he serves the ideals of democracy—a servant to the group and its leaders—never a master.

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is meant by selectivity in an organization? In what ways are the farmer's organizations of your community selective?
2. How do farm ownership or tenure, mobility, and educational attainments affect membership and participation in rural organizations? How can these ill effects be minimized?
3. What are the effects of age, trips taken away from home and the type of family life affected by participation? How do these forces operate in your own community?

⁴⁰ E. C. Lindeman, "The Community." New York: Association Press, New York, 1921, out of print, page 190.

⁴¹ Sanderson, *op. cit.*, page 111.

4. What are the usual reasons people give for belonging to various rural organizations? What relation do these reasons have to participation in organization?
5. Why do people say they do not want to belong? How can such objection be met or overcome?
6. What are the forces that lead to favorable attitudes toward an organization? What causes unfavorable attitudes? What measures should be taken to prevent the development of unfavorable attitudes?
7. What types of conflict affect participation in rural organizations? Which do you consider most serious? Why?
8. Discuss the various types of action that call for retaliatory action. How could these have been prevented?
9. What are the chief methods of overcoming conflict? Which do you consider the most effective? Why?
10. How would you define leadership? What types of leadership does this include?
11. How do "leaders by precept" of whom you have knowledge function? What qualities do you think they should have to become group leaders?
12. In what ways have leaders in your own community developed? What are the methods used in the organizations you know best for the development of leaders? What do you think needs to be done to improve these methods?
13. Examine the personal qualities of the leaders in your community; which of these qualities do you consider essential for group leadership? Why?
14. How are persons selected for leadership in the organizations you know best? What did these people do to cause the group to single them out for leadership? How were they induced to take leadership in the first place? What are some other methods of inducing people to take leadership?
15. What should be the function of a good leader? How should he discharge those functions in order to assure himself of satisfactory results?
16. How are leaders in your community usually trained? What do you think is needed to improve that system of training?
17. What do you consider the most valuable rewards for leadership? Why?
18. What should be the role of the professional leader?

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Compare the New York and Illinois studies to determine the points in agreement; in what ways do the studies differ? Summarize for yourself the factors shown to affect membership and participation.

2. Study and brief the discussion in Sanderson and Polson on community conflicts and how they may be resolved. Analyze the case histories cited to discover types of conflict. How would you have endeavored to resolve them?
3. Apply the principles of leadership development discussed by Sanderson to a particular organization. How would the functioning of the organization be changed by the application of these principles?

EXERCISE

Analyze one of the farmers' or rural organizations in your community as to (1) extent to which members participate in its activity, (2) the reasons different types of members differ in their participation, (3) the reasons non-members do not become members, (4) the types of conflict which affect participation, and (5) the leadership in the organization: how leaders are selected; what is done to induce them to become leaders; what are their qualities; how they are trained; how they function as leaders; their rewards as leaders; and the role of professional leaders in the organization.

CHAPTER XXII

PRINCIPLES GUIDING EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION

The success or failure of an organization is determined by how effectively it serves the interests of its members and how it proceeds to acquire new members. This is true whether the organization is a local, independent group, a local group affiliated with a county, state and national system or a non-localized organization.

Means of Contact

Rural organizations use three general types of methods for keeping in contact with members: (1) individual contacts by professional and voluntary leaders, (2) contacts through neighborhood or community meetings, and (3) contacts made through house organs, news releases, radio programs, circular and personal letters and by representation at county, state and national meetings. Many organizations use all three types of contacts. Neighborhood and community meetings probably are the most widely used and the most effective method.¹

1. THE NEIGHBORHOOD AS A MEDIUM OF CONTACT. Everyone lives in and belongs to a neighborhood. One of the chief functions is to provide opportunity for trading work; closely related is the opportunity provided for visiting. People in neighborhoods are often related through kinship, they frequently belong to the same church, or they are of the same nationality. The neighborhood may be centered about a country school; it may have a social or educational club; it can be a significant group for carrying on a program of soil conservation on a drainage area basis; or the development of a youth or adult study club in the neighborhood make more nearly possible 100 per cent participation on the part of all of the people than in any kind of group except the family.

¹ Group methods of contact are recognized as among the most important by the Extension Service. See Gladys Gallup, "How to Put Your Information Across to Farmers." *Better Farming Methods*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 1947, page 42.

Neighborhoods are an important social group. They provide personal or face-to-face contacts.² They make possible a two-way process: (1) The presentation of programs of interest to the members and (2) opportunity for response from the members.

"Experience testifies to the value of the organization of farm people in neighborhoods, communities, and on a county basis. Such an organization if carefully planned, provides for contact with every family. Contact is made with families in small groups or through delegates representing a group. For best results this grouping of families must be done along naturally established lines. Artificial or arbitrary groupings result in imperfect coverage."³

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COMMUNITY UNIT. Local unit organization is an organic part of such organizations as the Grange and the Farmer's Union, and it is used to a considerable extent by the Farm Bureau in many states. This is true, also, of almost every type of rural organization which endeavors to make contact with a group of people in the rural community. Thus, it would seem, effective organization should begin with the local unit, though there are organizations which do operate on a larger unit basis, such as county or regional cooperatives. Even these find it profitable to go beyond individual service methods and hold neighborhood and community meetings in order to make more effective contacts and to spread the membership to a larger percentage of the total in a particular locality.⁴

The true basis of effective operation for any rural organization, then, is within the community, either on a close-unit neighborhood basis, or on the basis of a group drawn from the larger community area but yet providing fairly regular face-to-face contacts. Though the county or larger area may be considered the

² J. H. Kolb and D. G. Marshall, "Neighborhood and Community Relationships in Rural Society." Madison: Res. Bull. 154, Agr. Exp. Sta. of the Univ. of Wis., 1944, pages 10 to 28.

³ Bruce Poundstone and Howard W. Beers, "Neighborhood and Community Basis of Rural Organization." Lexington: Mimeo. Pub. Agr. Ext. Ser., Univ. of Ky., 1942.

⁴ See J. W. Jones, "Membership Relations of Cooperative Associations." Washington: Bull. No. 4, FCA, USDA, Oct., 1936, pages 65 to 69.

administrative unit, the community or neighborhood is the working unit.⁵ This means that the first task of farmers and rural organizations is to determine local needs upon which a program of service can be built; then be in a position to make use of county, state and national service agencies or organizations as the local need demands. Moreover, since rural people supply the rest of society not only with food and fibre but also with surplus population, it is only to be expected that the larger society help local units with funds and services, if needed; but the local unit should maintain responsibility for its program and activities, being willing to seek supervision and guidance from the service agencies or organizations.

If local responsibility is to be developed it is necessary to have a functioning local unit capable of determining its own policies and planning its own programs. But it is also essential to have working relationships with larger groups which open the way for securing services, supervision and counsel with or without organic relationships. There may be a close relationship such as is found in the Grange, for example; or the relationship can be loose, merely advisory, as, for example, that provided to farmers' club by the Extension Service through county program planning schools or conferences.⁶

Planning Community or Neighborhood Meetings

Rural organizations using the county or some similar area, find it advisable, occasionally, to call community or neighborhood meetings in order to carry out some part of the program. The most successful meetings are those which are carefully planned in advance. The planners must (1) be aware of local or membership needs, (2) secure the help of local leaders in making plans, (3) arouse an interest in the meeting on the part of those whose attendance is desired, (4) provide adequate facilities for the meeting, (5) hold the meeting in a place as accessible to all concerned

⁵ J. H. Kolb and Edmund deS. Brunner, "A Study of Rural Society." Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1946, pages 650-1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pages 651-2.

as possible and (6) conduct the meeting so as to hold interest and reach the desired objective.⁷

1. **DISCOVERING THE NATURAL GROUP AND ITS CENTER.** What makes up a group of neighbors? Planners of meetings need to know this in order to make the best possible use of this natural group. "A neighborhood is what the name implies, a small group of families who form a cluster of neighbors. Generally a neighborhood has a name and a center, usually a school, a church, a store. . . . Sometimes it is a racial or nationality group. It is made up of persons who know each other rather intimately and who speak of the neighborhood in designating their place of residence within the community. It is a small group who can easily meet together, and who, by virtue of their close, day-by-day relationships, express themselves freely in neighborhood group meetings."⁸

2. **HOLDING MEETINGS IN NATURAL CENTERS.** Neighborhood or community meetings should be held in the natural or usual meeting center for the people of the locality. This means that the planners must either know or find out what are the natural meeting centers. Farm people hesitate to go to meetings in a strange locality and will do so only if the meeting is such that they feel they cannot afford to miss it. They will attend their local church, school or community hall meeting not only because they are accustomed to going there for other meetings but also because they are relatively sure they will meet their friends and neighbors there.

3. **PLANNING ON THE BASIS OF NEEDS.** Techniques for arousing a sense of need on the part of members of local groups or of individuals has been discussed in a previous chapter. Meetings can be planned without testing for needs or interest, however, in an effort to put over a prescribed program or one handed down from above. In this case the planners must make the people believe they need and want the material; or some other attraction must be furnished in order to get the people to come to the meeting. As a rule,

⁷ D. E. Lindstrom and E. H. Regnier, "You Can Have Good Community Meetings." Urbana: Cir. 594, Univ. of Ill. Ext. Ser. and Home Ec., 1945.

⁸ Douglas Ensminger, "Measuring the Effectiveness of Your Community." Ithaca: Bull. 444, Cornell University Coll. of Agr., 1940, page 4.

however, prescribed programs are not accepted very well by rural people. Meetings to provide one thing but planned to get something else before the people under the guise of the advertised intent may do more harm than good to the cause. It is better to adapt or rework the materials to meet local needs.

The best method is to plan the meeting on the basis of discovered needs and interests of the group.⁹ In such a case local people should and will be consulted and asked to cooperate in planning the meeting. They should be given as much responsibility for the meeting as possible.

4. SELECTING THE LOCAL LEADERS. How can local leaders who are accepted by the people in the neighborhood or community be selected? People can be easily selected for leadership by county or even community or township officials; but they may or may not be the best leaders, that is, the ones in which the group has confidence and for whom they will work together. "It is important to select leaders on the basis of their own neighborhood relationships. Some families have close relationships with everyone in the neighborhood. . . . The best potential leaders can be discovered by asking the farmers in a neighborhood 'Which of your neighbors would you trust most to represent you in meetings on public policy affecting farming and farm life?' It will be found that three or four families will be mentioned more often than others."¹⁰ Neighbors know who they want to conduct local meetings and represent them in other meetings.

The method used by the Ohio Farm Bureau in setting up Advisory Councils uses the neighborhood approach. The start is made with one interested couple of family group. These seek out a second couple or family for counsel. It is significant that workers are urged to "talk with both wife and husband about the idea. The husband naturally waits for the approval of his wife since she is the one who sees that the home is in order and refreshments prepared when guests are coming. . . . Make the idea seem natural and

⁹ R. W. Kerns, "Better Rural Meetings." State College: Cir. 216, Penn. State Coll., Div. of Agr. Ext., 1939, page 2.

¹⁰ Poundstone and Beers, *op. cit.*, page 8.

simple. . . . You now have a couple who agree to the general idea. They will ask, 'Whom shall we invite?' You ask, 'Who do you neighbor with?' Soon a list of names shows up, a date set, a Farm Bureau worker scheduled to attend, and plans for inviting people outlined."¹¹

5. **PLANNING PUBLICITY FOR MEETINGS.** Meetings must be planned for enough in advance that interest and enthusiasm can be developed among those who ought to attend. Good publicity previous to the meeting is essential if people are to be stimulated to want to attend. Channels of publicity include (1) announcement at previous or other meetings, (2) sending cards or letters to those likely to be interested, (3) making personal contact or telephone calls to urge attendance, (4) using posters, circulars and handbills, (5) submitting news stories, advertisements, using pictures or illustrations, (6) using the radio, and (7) following up the first announcement by subsequent calls or contacts. In community or neighborhood meetings the matter should be made as much as possible an event to which people will look forward by constant reminders of the meeting by the leaders. A separate committee or person to work on publicity should be secured, if possible. The meeting date should be set far enough in advance so that other meeting dates will not conflict.

6. **PROVIDING ADEQUATE MEETING FACILITIES.** Adequate facilities for the meeting will depend upon the group. The meeting place should be made comfortable, clean and as attractive as possible. Few people like to attend meetings in dingy, poorly lighted and ventilated halls. Homes, community rooms at schools, church basements, lodge halls and similar meeting places should be surveyed as to their adequacy. Someone should be asked to see that the building will be opened, heated and properly arranged before people begin to arrive. For small groups the seats should be arranged in an informal circle, if possible, in order to stimulate as much group participation as possible. Larger groups probably will have to be seated in the conventional manner, all facing the front

¹¹ "Farm Bureau Advisory Council Handbook." Columbus: Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, 1946.

of the room. They should be spared having to face a glaring light, either from windows during daylight or from lights at night. A local committee to welcome those attending and to help them find places for wraps and to find seats will help develop a friendly atmosphere from the start.

7. PREPARING TO CONDUCT THE MEETING. Much of the success of a meeting depends upon the way it is conducted. The person selected to preside at the meeting must (1) have the confidence of the group or at least have some knowledge of the interests of the people making up the group; (2) know why the meeting has been called and what is to be accomplished at the meeting; (3) know how to conduct a meeting. Some of the things a good presiding officer will try to do are:¹²

a. Know what is to be on the program of the meeting and the time allotted to each part.

b. Meet the people who are to take part on the program and clear with them as to time allotted and place on the program.

c. See that the meeting starts on time and closes at the time scheduled.

d. See that each person or group to take part on the program is presented in a courteous and friendly manner, giving each a proper introduction to the audience.

e. Conduct the meeting in an orderly, businesslike manner, yet striving for as much informality as possible in order to encourage discussion or questions if desired, keeping the program moving.

f. Follow rules of parliamentary procedure¹³ whenever necessary, suggesting action, calling for seconds to motions, asking individuals for their opinions and recommending that issues needing further study be referred to committees whenever this seems desirable.

¹² Adapted from W. H. Stacy, "Community Meetings." Ames: Ext. Bull. 190, Iowa State College, 1933.

¹³ See A. G. Arvold, "Neighborhood Activities in Country Communities." Fargo: Cir. 171, Ext. Ser., N. D. Agr. Coll., 1940, pages 75-79. See also W. H. Stacy, "Use Parliamentary Guides." Ames: RS-2, Ext. Ser. Ia. State Coll. of Agr., 1946.

g. Quietly and courteously sidetrack matters distinctly out of place and prevent individuals or groups from using more time than they should. A meeting can be killed by long, drawn-out talks or discussions.

h. Give full opportunity for the group to take action on issues discussed, if desired. This can be done best in small groups. In large groups it may be best to place the matter into the hands of a small, representative committee to report back later in the meeting or at a later meeting. Their report may take the form of a resolution upon which the group may be called upon to vote.

Meetings called in communities and neighborhoods can and frequently do lead to a desire to organize a local group. Care must be taken when creating new organizations in rural areas; too much outside stimulation may cause hasty or needless organization, thus preventing effective cooperation by already organized groups or the formation of a group later which will have adequate local support.

Essential Principles for Organization

An understanding of the essential principles for organization is important to the success of any group: (1) The people concerned must feel the need for the organization and be willing to contribute something to it; (2) the aims and purposes of the organization should be clearly outlined; (3) the officer and committee setup should be adequate; (4) the programs should be planned to carry out the aims and purposes of the organization; (5) the projects and activities should grow out of the needs and desires of the members and be carried to a successful conclusion; (6) the people enrolled as members should feel themselves a part of the organization, not only by receiving special benefits, but also by being given some responsibility in the work of the organization; (7) the organization should endeavor to cooperate with other groups and organizations working on common or similar problems; and (8) the organization should be made adaptable to changing conditions or cease operation when its function is performed.

1. **DEFINING AIMS AND PURPOSES.** "A clearly defined objective is a first essential for a successful organization. The group that has

a specific goal produces more and gives more satisfaction than the organization that drifts along on a haphazard course. A firm belief in the destiny of an organization creates driving power—dynamic—for increasing the participation of its members in group activities.¹⁴

Objectives of rural organizations, especially those which have local units functioning in the neighborhood or community may include one or more of the following :

a. Providing economic and social benefits for the members. Most rural organizations are more or less concerned about advancing the economic welfare of their members either through educational methods or by a process of direct cooperation. The social benefits to be derived are too often overlooked ; where given adequate consideration they add strength and durability to the organization.

b. Increasing understanding among the people and providing a means of solving common problems for the individual or the group. Rural organizations which endeavor to fulfill this objective develop thereby "a model democracy."

c. Providing benefits of service organizations or agencies : the county, state and national organization, or those of such agencies as the Extension service.

d. Coordinating the work of local groups. The organization, especially if it is of the community council type, may correlate, strengthen or supplement what is done by other groups, such as 4-H clubs, rural youth groups, cooperatives or other special interest groups.

2. PROVIDING ADEQUATE LEADERSHIP. The leaders in an organization are usually responsible for (1) administration, (2) record keeping, (3) care of finances, (4) program planning and (5) care of special duties and activities.¹⁵ In some groups all of these functions are performed by two or three elected officers who may appoint committees from time to time to take over special

¹⁴Dwight Sanderson, and R. A. Polson, "Rural Community Organization." New York: Wiley, 1939, page 340.

¹⁵D. E. Lindstrom, "Local Group Organization Among Illinois Farm People." Urbana: Bull. 392, Univ. of Ill. Agr. Exp. Sta., 1933, page 145.

duties such as planning programs from meeting to meeting. The more successful organizations provide for a division of labor among the leaders, setting forth their responsibilities in a constitution and giving them opportunity for training to fit themselves to carry out those duties.

a. *The appointment and work of committees.* Committees are usually appointed in an organization either (1) to carry out a specific duty, such as arranging for a program, or (2) to study and recommend policies to guide the organization. Small committees of one, three or five are usually more effective than larger committees; in very few cases should committees number more than nine. Committees should always have odd numbers to avoid a stalemate in the committee. The chairman usually appoints committees and endeavors to have all factions and points of view represented.

New committees should be called together as soon as possible after appointment; each member should have a step-by-step analysis of the job in hand to guide him in his work on the committee; most committees should report their work in writing, to include: "(1) the committee's assignment, with a definite statement of the issue or issues discussed; (2) the facts bearing on these issues; (3) the interests involved; (4) the committee's recommendation."¹⁸

b. *The preparation of the leadership.* Leadership training may take a number of forms. When new officers take their offices they should have an opportunity of going over what each is expected to do. Thus it is well for the new officers in any organization to meet as early as possible and make a "job analysis" of their respective tasks. Sometimes the organization makes this easier by having a "work up" system, starting with membership on a committee, then working up to chairmanship and finally, possibly, to the presidency. Leadership training opportunities are provided, also, in schools held by the organization. More and more such agencies as the Extension Service provide county and community leadership training and program planning schools for officers and program

¹⁸ Sanderson and Polson, *op. cit.*, pages 342 to 344.

committees of rural organizations.¹⁷ District, state, regional and national conferences have become more numerous in recent years and as means of communication have improved.

c. *Elements in officer job analysis.* An officer's job analysis could be carried out in any one of these types of meetings or schools. Such an analysis may result in the following list of duties:

(1) The president helps direct the planning of all programs, sees that meetings are called; presides at meetings and calls them on time; appoints necessary committees; keeps informed on community, county, state and national programs and materials of interest to the organization; attends leadership training and program planning conferences.

(2) The vice-president helps plan all programs; acts for the president when he is unable to serve; helps build up membership; keeps informed on related programs.

(3) The secretary keeps an up-to-date list of all members; keeps minutes of all meetings; handles all correspondence; helps make program plans; keeps a record of all committee reports.

(4) The treasurer keeps a record of all income and expenditures; pays all bills when empowered to do so; keeps the organization advised on its financial status; recommends changes in the fiscal procedure.

(5) The program committee makes out program plans; advises the president as to the appointment of needed committees to carry out the program plans; checks with committees on the execution of program plans, aiding in finding materials and personnel if necessary; helps arrange special programs such as demonstrations, mass meetings or tours; sees that the organization is represented at all meetings of concern to the group; attends program planning schools or conferences; keeps informed on sources which will help in planning programs and developing activities.

Each new set of officers should go through the process of analyzing the job of each officer, whether it follow the above form

¹⁷ J. H. Kolb, and A. F. Wileden, "Making Rural Organization Effective." Madison: Bull. 40, Agr. Exp. Sta., Univ. of Wis., 1928.

or some form prescribed by the service organization or the previous officers.

3. **PLANNING PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS.** The success or failure of an organization is often determined by the quality of its program and activities. A growing organization is one which is constantly alert to the needs and interests of its members, and which plans ahead to meet these needs and interests.

Most successful rural organizations plan their programs for a year ahead, making possible seasonal changes in the programs. Programs planned for a year ahead make possible (1) the appointment of committees at the beginning of the year to take care of the various parts of the program, giving them ample time to prepare, (2) bringing in program materials which take time to secure and (3) giving the members concrete information as to what the organization will try to do for the year.

Meetings' programs should be planned to have variety and balance. Even if the meeting is to be for men only, or for women only, the meeting will be more interesting and attractive if, for example, the educational program carries with it some entertainment or opportunity for relaxation. Rural organizations, especially those attended by all members of the family, must observe the rule of providing variety and balance. A pattern of a meeting program which will meet the needs of most such organizations follows:¹⁸

- 7:30 Community singing; an "icebreaker"; or a period for mixing and getting people acquainted.
- 7:45 Business meeting: Call to order; reading of minutes; old business; new business; announcements; reports.
- 8:00 Entertainment number (planned especially for the children).
- 8:10 Educational program: talk, movie, demonstration; discussion; etc.
- 8:40 Entertainment program.
- 9:00 Social period and visiting.
- 10:00 Adjournment.

¹⁸ Lindstrom and Regnier, *op. cit.*

It is important that the educational feature come before the entertainment and social periods; thus opportunity for relaxation and for small informal group discussion may follow.

The essential points in a well-balanced program for a meeting can be tested as to whether it fulfills the following criteria:

"a. The first event on the program should challenge the attention of all individuals and secure their participation.

"b. The business session . . . should be guided so that no time is lost in aimless general discussions. Plans requiring study may be best referred to committees. Organizations conducting a substantial amount of business need to have this handled in separate meetings of boards of directors.

"c. Every member of the group can and should participate . . . community singing and refreshments provide the simplest means by which all can take part.

"d. Every meeting should have its climax. There should be a feature which is thought provoking and outstanding enough so that individuals will remember it and talk about it after the meeting is over.

"e. The other parts of the program should be planned in relation to the main feature so that there will be unity and a development of interest toward the climax.

"g. There should be a happy ending, and people should leave with a desire for more. It is far better to have the program short and interesting, with people commenting on its brevity, than to have it loosely organized and drawn out so that there is desire to leave before it is over. . . ." ¹⁹

Projects and activities should be assigned to special committees. Many rural organizations are known for the projects which they carry on in the community. These may relate to farm or home improvements; boys' or girls' club work; preparation of discussion or debate material; planning fairs, tours or demonstrations; working for some community improvement, such as improved roads or schools; developing cooperative organizations; improving health

¹⁹ W. H. Stacy, "Community Meetings." Ames: Ext. Bull. 190, Iowa State College, page 9.

or social welfare conditions; cooperating with the churches or some other organization; or planning picnic or special social functions for the group. The principles guiding the committee in working on the project are the same as for other committees (see page 408); but project committees should (1) outline the project to be carried out, (2) make plans for carrying it out, (3) get the approval of the organization on the plans, (4) secure the help of the members in working on the details of the project and (5) carry out the project.

4. GETTING MEMBERS TO TAKE PART. An organization set up on democratic principles should provide a place of responsibility for each of its members. This is usually done through a system of committees representing the work the organization has set for itself. Service clubs, for example, place all members on some working committee, each member usually being given some voice in the choice of committees.

The simplest form of membership participation is attendance at meetings. This is accomplished best by providing programs in which members are interested. Many members of local organizations prefer to limit their participation to mere attendance; some are not given a chance for participation. Members who do take some responsibility, beyond attendance at meetings, however, are more likely to be loyal to the organization—to support it in times of stress.

“If members are to participate, a definite plan or policy of encouragement should be carried out. First, new members should be told that they are expected to take an active part. Older members should set a good example in this regard. Second, they should be given something to do. This should be in the nature of simple tasks at first, and become increasingly difficult as their ability and experience increase. Third, they should share in the management of the organization by being appointed on its important committees, and finally by being elected to offices of responsibility. The organization thereby becomes a training school not only in theory but in practice. The members may thus become good members and good citizens of their community.”²⁰

²⁰ Kolb and Wileden, *op. cit.*, page 24.

5. COOPERATING WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS. The accomplishments of the three great farmers' organizations have been shown to be far greater when they worked together than when they were in conflict. Three principles guide cooperation with other groups:

"a. Organizations that keep aware of local needs are less likely to get into difficulties than organizations that claim priority rights to particular phases of work. If the goal is the selection of certain needs, the help of similar organizations may more often be welcomed rather than resented.

"b. Overlapping memberships rather than mutually exclusive memberships aid in solving difficulties and in preventing them from arising between groups.

"c. A council, in which leaders come together to plan, often prevents conflicts. In council organization, officers have an opportunity to talk out embarrassing difficulties and to plan needed cooperative projects."²¹

Procedure in cooperative planning can be carried along two lines (1) planning to meet a single, clearly drawn issue on which it is discovered several organizations can work together and gain greater ends than if each worked separately and (2) frequent meetings of the leaders of various groups to discuss and plan together on a broad basis, thus creating accord on general issues and minimizing discord.²² Such conferences not only can provide work for all groups, but each can be challenged to work its best on the elements of the total problem on which it chooses to work.

6. ADAPTING TO NEW NEEDS. Too often the constitutions and by-laws of an organization stand in the way of its programs. To avoid this difficulty the organization should (1) have a flexible and relatively easily amended constitution and (2) bring the instrument up for review at periodic intervals to be sure it is in tune with the times.

²¹ Sanderson and Polson, *op. cit.*, pages 356-357.

²² Lindstrom, *op. cit.*, page 15.

Organizations have their ups and downs.²³ It is well to check up in both periods to determine the causes. Many farmers' organizations maintain close membership contacts, even interviewing past members to determine why they dropped out, so as to check up on the work of the organization. The most effective check-up system is to call upon the members at periodic intervals as to what should be the future policy and program. Thus the leaders know what should be stressed in certain times, what new services to add, what old ones to drop or hold in abeyance and what changes in leadership or management is desired.

The rank and file of members must be kept aware of the problems and programs of the organization if they are to be of much help in making changes. Too often there are members who cease to participate or who drop out, whose reasons are not secured; a frank facing of the real reasons for loss of membership and an alteration of policies to meet their objections may prevent further loss; and it may gain back some of the old members.

If an organization finds that it no longer meets the real needs of the members or cannot make changes to meet them, then it is better that it die than to struggle to keep up the organization merely for the sake of organization. Other systems or forms may serve the people better and more efficiently; the old organization may only stand in the way of some new means of providing the service.

7. MAINTAINING SECONDARY CONTACTS. Affiliated rural organizations are by virtue of their affiliation in contact with the county, state and national branches of the organization. All three national farmers' organizations, for example, send out news letters, publish house organs for the members, and conduct national, state and county radio programs. Rural organizations having no such affiliations must depend upon the local leadership for securing program and other services of value to the local group. Many rural organizations, both affiliated and non-affiliated, make use of program services, bulletins, circulars, newsstories, and radio programs

²³ Kolb and Wileden, *op. cit.*, pages 3 and 4.

provided by such service agencies as the Agricultural Extension Service, departments of Public Health, and similar agencies.²⁴

Affiliated groups, also, make contact with county, state and national groups by means of local leader representation at county, state, or national meetings, or on committees or boards of directors. The problem, often, is to get the right leaders selected. Too often the leaders are selected on the spur of the moment; they have no time to prepare or to secure the wishes or sentiments of the group as to issues to come up before the larger assembly. Organizations having no local groups are faced with the added difficulty of finding the leader who has the confidence of the local group. Finally, many leaders selected attend larger meetings or conferences find it difficult to report back to the group. It is desirable, therefore, (1) to select delegates in advance, (2) give them an opportunity to learn the sentiments of the local group, and (3) make a place in later meetings for their report of the proceedings especially if it requires some action on the part of the local unit.

Conferences on program planning held by service agencies serve somewhat the same function as do conventions and annual meetings. Here all leaders of rural organizations may pool their ideas as to programs to be planned in the future which may be of greatest value to the members and the community.

A system of secondary contacts assuring local groups of the benefits of service organizations and agencies can thus be worked out (1) as a part of an organizational system and (2) by voluntary participation in conferences held by service agencies on the part of local independent groups. Such a system of contacts is essential to the most effective functioning of rural organizations.

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the means by which organizations maintain contact with their members? Which type is most effective? Why?
2. Why is the local unit the best basic unit for effective rural organization? What is the relation of the community to the county unit of organization?
3. What is the role of the neighborhood in carrying on organization work? How can neighborhood leaders and groups be discovered?
4. What are the factors to be considered in planning community or neighborhood meetings? Which factor do you consider most important to insuring a successful meeting? Why?
5. How should local leaders be chosen? What qualities should the leaders in your neighborhood have who were chosen on this basis?
6. What should a presiding officer be prepared to do? What should he check on before the meeting? After the meeting? In what respects are presiding officers usually least well prepared? How can these weaknesses be overcome?

7. What are the eight principles essential for effective organization?
8. What are the types of duties required of a set of officers? How are they taken care of in the rural organization you know best? How can this system be improved upon?
9. What are the usual functions of committees? How should they be set up to perform these functions?
10. What should constitute a job analysis for officers and committees? How can this be done most effectively? Outline what you think are the chief duties of the officers of some rural organization in your community.
11. What would you consider essential in the planning of programs and projects? What are the essential points in a well balanced program? How should projects be planned and carried out?
12. If you were faced with the necessity of getting members to take part, how would you proceed?
13. What are the essential principles guiding cooperation with other groups? How can common problems be emphasized and differences be minimized?
14. What should an organization do to adapt itself to new needs and conditions? If an organization has fulfilled its usefulness, how should it be dealt with?
15. What are the forms of secondary contacts which can be maintained? How should these contacts be maintained?

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Analyze the system of neighborhood and community organization described by Poundstone and Beers. Compare it with the system described by Ensminger.
2. Outline the suggestions given by Sanderson and Polson for making a rural organization effective. Apply the principles to your own community. To one of the farmers' organizations.
3. Using Kerns' and Stacy's bulletins, outline what you think will insure successful community meetings.
4. Compare the principles guiding successful organization outlined by Arvold with those by Stacy and those by Kolb & Wileden.

EXERCISE

Analyze the organization with which you are most familiar to determine the principles discussed in this chapter which are observed by the organization. To what observed principles are its successes due? Determine the principles not observed which contribute to its weakness.

PART V

National Policies, Rural Values and Human Welfare

Policy making in a democracy should be done by the people or their representatives. The more people in general can be made to feel that they have a voice in policy making the healthier is the democracy.

Keeping policy making close to agricultural peoples is particularly important. They are the nation's human seed bed. A study of the extent to which they take part in policy making can lay the basis for setting up means to bring them into or keep them participating.

National policies must be related to human welfare. The values in rural life essential to human welfare are particularly important and should be nurtured. The next two chapters deal, therefore, with policy making and rural values in their relation to human welfare.

CHAPTER XXIII

INFLUENCE ON NATIONAL POLICY

Farmers and rural organizations have had more or less influence on national policy making all through the history of the United States, giving chief attention to policies for helping alleviate the economic ills affecting agriculture and rural life. First came the agricultural clubs, fairs and farmers' clubs. Even with the country predominantly rural these organizations found it difficult to secure government action in the interest of agriculture. Though George Washington recommended a National Board of Agriculture in his presidency, the first federal appropriations for agriculture came only fifty years later when \$1000 was appropriated to the patent office. Land was cheap and plentiful at the time and farmers "moved west" rather than endeavor to organize for action to secure redress.

The Growth of Government Service

The Civil War marked a definite turning point in the affairs of American agriculture. For then free land was made available, the national land policy ostensibly favored the family-sized farm; but some farmers were in distress and the first widespread agrarian movement began. The last half of the 19th Century can be said, also, to be the beginning of the industrial revolution in agriculture.¹ It has moved more slowly than in industry but the trend has been toward increased mechanization ever since.

1. REGULATION AND EDUCATION. The farmers' organizations, especially following the Civil War, pressed hard for favorable legislation. Railroad regulation, the establishment of educational institutions, especially Land-Grant Colleges of Agriculture, and institutions for research, notably the Agricultural Experiment Station, came in the wake of these earlier farmers' movements. Out of the work of farmers' organizations was borne the cooperative movement; the work of farmers' organizations was later shown in

¹ Arthur M. Schlisinger, "The Agricultural Revolution in the United States," *Science*: 72, 585-594.

the securing of protective legislation for economic cooperation. Concurrent with the movement for more economic cooperatives came the movement for adult education which culminated in the Smith-Lever Act for Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, and the movement for agricultural education culminating in the Smith-Hughes Act. Whether or not farmers' organizations had much to do directly with these movements, certainly they had much to do with maintaining and strengthening the services.

2. DIRECT ACTION. Then came the movement for direct action, stimulated in large part by farmers' organizations. The direct action was on the part of farm groups themselves, at first, but later it was encouraged by governmental agencies, supported, to a greater or less degree, by farmers' organizations.

From an appropriation of \$1000 for agricultural research in the Patent Office, then, federal aid to agriculture, largely supported and sanctioned by farmers' organizations, has grown to complex and monumental proportions. The United States Department of Agriculture, for example, had, in 1939, before the World War II expansion, "eighteen bureaus and offices with line functions and twelve with staff functions. The personnel included 79,724 full-time employees, 20,623 part-time employees, and 2,766 cooperative employees engaged in almost every known profession and occupation. About 13,950 persons, or less than one-seventh of the total are stationed in Washington. The remainder are scattered among approximately 3,000 field stations and offices throughout the United States and elsewhere. Roughly 33,770 of the full-time employees are recruited from Civil Service, together with many of the part-time employees. Of the remaining 45,954 many are employed cooperatively with station and field units of local government." ²

3. THE CHANGE TOWARD MORE GROUP POWER. The United States Department of Agriculture has been considered a service agency, not only to agriculture but, as a result of agricultural

² Donald C. Blaisdell, "Government and Agriculture," Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1940, pages 183-184.

improvements, to the whole of society. In view of the development of these services to agriculture, F. L. Elliott writing in the 1940 Yearbook of Agriculture calls attention to changes affecting the American farmer which "raise problems and issues of great importance to the nation as a whole." His concern is as to what policy or what particular lines of action are best calculated to meet the situation :

"(a) What can be done to bring about greater stability within agriculture itself, to minimize the adverse effects upon the individual producer of those physical, economic, and social changes? Is unrestricted individual action most likely to achieve this result, or should we pursue a policy of united action? If the latter what form should it take? Should cooperative action by farmers be purely voluntary, or should it in part be brought about through the use of monetary inducements or the exercise of the police and taxing powers of the state and federal governments?

"(b) What can or should be done to improve the position of agriculture as a whole in relation to other industries so as to prevent the serious repercussion on farm prices and income produced by wide swings in business activity and industrial unemployment? Should agriculture adopt measures now used by industry, or should the Federal Government attempt, through regulatory and other legal measures, to bring about a reversal in the present policies of strong central control over production, marketing, and prices, and substitute a policy directed toward greatly expanded output, lower prices, and greater social responsibility?

"(c) What policy or line of action is best calculated to result in the public interest with respect to conservation and the forestalling of the tremendous waste in both physical and human resources which have such great significance for the future welfare of the nation? Shall we depend entirely upon educational appeal to awaken and foster a feeling of stewardship in the land in the hope of achieving conservation in that way; or shall we pursue a more direct and positive policy of group action in which benefit payments and other devices are used to supplement the educational effort? . . . Can we afford to pursue a hands-off policy and dis-

regard the plight of rural people now stranded in poor land areas and living on worn out farms; or trying to eke out an existence as croppers or wage hands in the better areas; or, even worse, living as immigrants in some lean-to along the highway or in a labor camp? . . . Or shall we follow a more positive policy of rehabilitation and reform whereby direct government assistance will be given these underprivileged people in the way of loans and grants, guidance in relocation and resettlement, and rural conservation works programs, as well as medical care, hospitalization, and other public-service benefits?"³

The policy of government previous to 1930 was pretty largely a let-alone policy; legislation favorable to agriculture was demanded by farm groups and was very much of a take-it-or-leave-it nature. Mr. Elliott points out that in 1930 and the following years a new policy was started, authorizing the use of governmental power to restrain or modify the action of the individual, both in the production and the marketing of agricultural products. How far should this process go? To what extent should government control the action of individual farmers or a group of farmers in their economic or social affairs? What is a good national policy affecting agriculture and what role in its formulation should farmers through their organization play?

Elements in a National Policy

A good national agricultural policy must have two chief concerns, (1) the welfare of the farmer, his family and his community, and (2) the welfare of those dependent upon the products from the farm. A review of the policies followed by the United States Department of Agriculture, which should disclose its established policy in action, will reveal the extent to which these two essentials are now a part of national policy. Some indication can be given in this review, also, as to the extent of control exercised by government over the individual or the group in agriculture.

Farmers in America still rate freedom of opportunity high as a desirable goal for American farmers, but they want also a measure

³ "Farmers in a Changing World," pages 107-108.

of security: protection against severe depressions, levels of living comparable to those in urban areas, and systems of education, health protection, and other social services on a par with those in urban areas. Desirable American goals for agriculture, therefore, have been stated to include:⁴

(1) A strong durable agriculture amply employing its human and material resources, but relatively secure against the buffets of fortune.

(2) A constructive role for agriculture in an expanding world economy in which production at least keeps abreast of population growth and which looks to increasing living levels for all people everywhere.

(3) Greater stability in farm incomes and tenure, including insurance against extreme price declines and severe general depression, which will encourage an agriculture that pays its way instead of being increasingly dependent upon government support.

1. POLICIES IN THE MAKING. The discussion of "Policies in Action" by H. R. Tolley⁵ assures us first that policies are made as "a part of the daily, detailed living of the people and the functioning of their government in all its branches. If the formulation of policy is conceived as being of this character, the powerful directive force of popular will throughout the process is apparent."⁶ Second it points out that the objectives of contemporary policies are of three general types: "(1) Activities designed to increase incomes of farmers who produce commodities for sale on a commercial scale; (2) the efforts to raise incomes and to improve the condition of migrant laborers, share croppers, subsistence farmers, victims of drouth or flood, and others at a disadvantage within agriculture itself; and (3) activities designed to encourage better land use and more efficient production."⁷

⁴ Joseph F. Davis, "What Kind of An Agriculture Does America Want?" Address before Conference of Agricultural Economists, Minneapolis, 1945, sponsored by the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.

⁵ 1940 Yearbook of Agriculture, *op. cit.*, page 1168.

⁶ 1940 Yearbook of Agriculture, *op. cit.*, page 1168.

⁷ "Farmers in a Changing World," *op. cit.*, page 1169.

The policies in action, as reviewed by Mr. Tolley include (1) efforts to increase buying power through the food stamp plan which virtually sets up a two-price system and involves dumping our agricultural surpluses on the domestic rather than the foreign market; (2) control of production and marketing through acreage control, marketing quotas, commodity loans, marketing agreements, "devices essentially designed to give farmers some of the advantages that labor gets through organization and business through financial control,"⁸ (3) financial adjustments including government wheat insurance, liberal and cheap credit, notably in relation to land use practices and security of tenure; (4) state acquisition of land to advance conservation, including use of state and local as well as federal power and (5) the making of social adjustments, particularly among underprivileged groups.

On social adjustments Mr. Hambridge summarizes as follows: "It is not the American way to hand out doles to these people, but there are several lines of effort that fit into our tradition. The most likely include (a) more attention to needs of the smallscale producer in acreage allotments, benefit payments, soil conservation practices; (b) help in moving from tenancy to ownership of family-sized farms, and also improvements in tenancy itself; (c) employment on worthwhile public works projects especially adapted to rural needs; (d) vocational guidance, and assistance in the form of credit based on character, for those capable of getting a toehold in the commercial system, either as individuals or as cooperative groups; (e) further development of part-time and more or less self-sufficient farming on a modernized basis for those who must remain outside the commercial system. One rather special and urgent problem concerns farm labor—at least the migratory labor used in specialized farming. As the very least that can be done here, public opinion seems to favor decent camps and educational opportunities for the children of workers."⁹

⁸ Hambridge, Grove, "Farmers in a Changing World," USDA Yearbook, 1941, page 99.

⁹ *Ibid.*, page 100.

2. METHODS OF POLICY MAKING. "The theory of democracy has always envisaged the citizen as the ultimate maker of policy. Neither policy by explosion, such as occurs when the orderly processes of government fail, nor policy making by executive action, such as occurs when the experts and administrators make the decisions without the citizens' participation, is likely to occur in a society where democratic process is reasonably in accord with democratic theory. Hence, if we are to preserve the democratic process it is absolutely essential that the farmer play an important part and have a direct voice in the formulation of farm policy as well as its execution."¹⁰

Can farmers' and rural organizations be the chief avenues through which national policies can be formulated? Or are they too selective? Do they miss completely a certain element in the rural population? We have seen that the Farm Bureau holds about 1,275,000 of the nation's 6,500,000 farm families in its membership.¹¹ The Grange touches almost 800,000; and the Farmers' Union contacts about 150,000 families. Each of these organizations serves somewhat different areas of the nation. The Farmers' Union claims to make contact with more farmers on lower economic levels than do the other two farmers' organizations. Add to the contacts made by these three great farmers' organizations the contacts made by farmers' cooperatives and it may well be that considerably more than one-half of the farm families of the nation have direct contact with one or more of these organizations.

These are voluntary organizations and are free to act as independent agents. Can they not be depended upon to formulate national policy? Or should government develop forms of organization among rural people which will insure all classes the opportunity to participate in the making of policies? It is questionable,

¹⁰ Elliott, *op. cit.*, pages 108-109.

¹¹ The 1945 Agricultural Census shows 5.8 million independent establishments, each producing on the average between \$2,500 and \$4,000 per year. See Elco L. Grunshields, "How Big is the Farm Business." *The Agr. Situation*, BAE, U. S. D. A., Vol. 31, No. 3, March, 1947.

for example, if migrant laborers, share croppers or indeed a very large percentage of low income farmers have much voice in the shaping of policies advocated by the general farmers' organizations and cooperatives. When one considers, further, that there is a lack of cooperation among these organizations sufficient to create serious differences between them as to desirable national policies affecting agriculture, it is open to question whether they are the "farm people's voice" in what is most needed from government in aid to all farm people.

This is evidently the point of view taken by some government leaders, for two definite systems of organization have been developed by government agencies for getting farmers' help in shaping national policies. These are (1) the sampling method of securing information from farmers on how various programs should be conducted and (2) what was termed the Agricultural Planning Project. Both were administered by the United Department of Agriculture.

a. *A technique for making administration more democratic.* "Recently the Department of Agriculture, through a small staff of specialists, started securing for administrators the information needed to make decisions in accordance with the desires of the people." It was possible, for example, for the Agricultural Adjustment Administration to secure information on how farmers in various parts of the country want the Agricultural Adjustment Administration program for a particular commodity conducted; or for the Farm Security Administration to learn how the farmers in a given locality want the tenant-purchase plan operated; or for the Soil Conservation Service to find out what assistance farmers in eroded areas desire in carrying out a conservation program.

"The method used in obtaining information on these or other issues is what is known as 'sampling.' It consists in asking questions of a relatively small group of farmers carefully selected so that they will be representative of all farmers. In this way the information needed can be secured much more quickly and at much less cost than is possible through referenda or any other procedure. In fact, the method is the only one now known for securing this kind

of information accurately, rapidly, and inexpensively enough to be practicable."¹²

b. *A democratic system of planning.* A movement in democracy about which most people know very little was under way in the rural areas throughout the United States just previous to World War II; namely, "county land use planning," but it became much more than this name implies—first because it extended down to all the small local communities in the county; second, because it was not confined to land use but took in educational conditions, medical care, and a host of other things that are important in each community.

The work was organized in three progressive stages. The first was preparatory, which includes the organizing of committees. The second stage was intensive planning work in studying problems, agreeing on facts, and deciding on goals and objectives for the improvement of agriculture and of rural life. The third was cooperating to decide specifically what will be done, and by whom, to achieve the goals and objectives; this stage aimed to develop a unified program of action by all agencies concerned with agriculture in the county. The objective of this planning work looks to "a better life, including security, through the development of a better agriculture and a better adjustment of the institutions that affect agriculture."¹³ The activities were carried through county, community, and neighborhood committees and meetings, to every farm family.

County agricultural planning work took on new significance with the outbreak of the second world war. Where it operated it provided first-hand contact with every farm family; and the war efforts confronting agriculture required an organization which would contact every farm family. The system provided, also, for the essential two-way contact: the means of getting information to farmers and the opportunity given to them to express individual and group desires and opinions.

¹² Rensis Likert, "Democracy in Agriculture. Why and How," Yearbook, 1941, pages 994-1002.

¹³ Ellery A. Foster and Harold A. Vogel, "Cooperative Land Use Planning," USDA Yearbook, 1941, pages 1138 to 1156.

Governmental forms for administering policies and for getting policies discussed did reach into many rural neighborhoods in the nation during the war. During the war approximately 700,000 persons were recruited by the extension service as neighborhood leaders.¹⁴ With the close of the war the system of neighborhood leader organization was abandoned in most states by the extension service, especially in areas in which local farmers' organizations were active.

Should these be revived, or should new forms of government organizations be developed? If so, these forms should be primarily of a service nature and, in a democratic society, should look to a free people who form themselves voluntarily into their own groups, to make the policies guiding the governmental services.

c. *The role of farmers' organizations in policy making.* Though there may be limitations to the effectiveness with which farmers and other rural organizations contact farmers, yet in a country in which the effective functioning of democracy and justice depends upon a working system of checks and balances, it is to the best interest of agriculture, if not to the whole of society that every opportunity and encouragement be given to farmers and rural organizations. Governmental agencies are always subject to control or at least political influence. Farmers' and rural organizations can and should act as a check upon the functioning of these agencies.

It is doubtless a healthy situation to have more than one strong national farmer's organization, just as it is desirable to have more than one strong national political party. By preserving the right of the minority to express its opinions and to "educate" to attain a majority, the democratic processes in a society are kept at work.

Hardin¹⁵ questions whether farmers' organizations, such as the Farm Bureau, the Grange, the Farmers' Union, or the Co-

¹⁴ "Report of Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, 1945." Washington: U. S. Dept. of Agr. Extension Service, page 27.

¹⁵ Charles M. Hardin, "Governmental Agricultural Policy Administration, and Farm Organizations in the United States." Chicago: The University of Chicago, mimeographed, 1947.

operative Council, can be regarded as the "voice of agriculture." He regards them, in a sense, as commodity groups, which seek national policies favorable to a single commodity, or unite to gain special favors for a group of commodities. Through strong state organizations, on the other hand, national policy can be unduly influenced to the demands from these states to the possible detriment of interests in other states. The championship by the California Farm Bureau of repeal of the 160 acre limitation of irrigation water provision in the Reclamation Act, for example, would seriously impair national policies favoring the family farm. Hardin points out, however, the tremendous amount of citizen participation in the formation of agricultural policy in the United States through these farmers' organizations and through the various governmental agricultural agencies, especially those making use of local farmer leadership.

Farmers' organizations can maintain contact with the rank and file of farmers, keeping them abreast of new developments and giving them a first-hand voice in policy making. The functioning of local community or neighborhood groups is essential to the best realization of such ends. The Grange is noted for its system of member participation in policy making through its subordinate Granges. The Community Farm Bureaus of Michigan, the Township Farm Bureaus of Iowa, the Farm Centers of California, and especially the Advisory Councils of Ohio are the types of groups needed if a system of widespread discussion and action on policies is to be maintained. The effective functioning of the Ohio Advisory Councils for getting widespread member action on proposed policies is of extreme importance in a democratic state. Such systems should be encouraged everywhere.

Planning and Policy Making

The era of planning came into being with the onset of the 1930 to 1935 depression. Intensive planning efforts were just getting under way in agriculture when the United States entered the second world war. Planning to meet war needs in agriculture made use

of existing farmers' organizational machinery. National, state and county War Boards were organized even before the entrance of the United States into the world conflict. These War Boards were made responsible for promoting all phases of the government's war efforts as they affected agriculture. By agreement, however, the educational task—the task of contacting every farm family with the war program—fell to the Extension Service. Plans developed in every state envisaged an organizational system which would enlist more than one million local leaders who, operating in neighborhoods with from 10 to 40 farm and town families, carried the program to the farmer on the outmost farm. All rural organizations and agencies were urged to cooperate to the fullest extent in the program. Thus, a vast educational system was developed in the rural areas of the country; these were planning as well as action groups; they performed a valuable service in the wartime period.

1. THE PROBLEMS. Postwar planning was under way by 1943 in the United States. The problems that face the United States in the postwar period are international in scope, and political, economic, social, military, psychological, and legal in character. The domestic problems of postwar economic reconstruction are concerned with the organization of money and credit, problems of savings and capital formation, of industrial and production policy, maintenance of employment and of adequate standards of living, and adjustment of international trade and investment. More specifically, when the war ended, we were faced with all the problems of demobilized soldiers, civilian war workers, and workers in defense industries; of taxation, debt adjustment, and fiscal policy; of regional development and balance.

“On the socio-economic side there will be continuing problems of national health and nutrition, of public education and recreation, of housing and social security. It appears to be the general opinion that, regardless of the outcome of the war and of fluctuations in party politics, the federal government will steadily extend its control over the machinery of investment and credit, the management of basic industries, the distribution of the labor force and the

national income, and the direction of foreign trade."¹⁶ Such was the prediction in 1942.

2. THE NEEDS. A number of national organizations and agencies have stated policies to meet farmers' needs in the postwar period. The proposals of only a few of them can be summarized here.

One of the agencies at work early in postwar planning was the Interbureau Committee on Postwar Planning of the United States Department of Agriculture. It urged (1) the conservation and development of physical resources: crop land and pasture, range land, and forest land; (2) the development of rural facilities and services; and (3) agricultural-industrial relations.

The Report of the Committee on Postwar Agricultural Policy of the Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities states that "The special responsibilities of agriculture are (1) to provide consumers with foods and fibers at reasonable prices, and (2) to maintain the productivity of basic land resources. The objectives of rural people are to obtain (1) incomes to provide a standard of living comparable to that of other large production groups, (2) freedom of opportunity, and (3) that degree of security which will make for stability of family and of community life."¹⁷ Needed are high levels of production and employment, economic stability, normal farm-to-city movements, conservation of land, water and forests, improved rural schools, better health and nutrition, extension of social security, better housing, electrification, telephone service, all-weather roads, recreation, and religious activities.

By 1945 the U. S. Department of Agriculture had set forth a long-range farm policy to "best achieve the promise of democracy." It was premised on the assertion that "the farm people of the nation want, and are entitled to, stable and adequate incomes, secure tenure, and their full share of the advantages and opportunities enjoyed by other groups in the economy." It is premised on the

¹⁶ George B. Galloway, "Post-War Planning in the United States." The Twentieth Century Fund, New York, 1942, pages 4 and 5.

¹⁷ "Postwar Agricultural Policy." Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, 1944. Available from any of these institutions.

assumption, also, of full-scale employment. A satisfactory farm program would then:

(1) Provide markets for farm production by increasing food consumption by low-income families.

(2) Assist farmers whose incomes would not be adequate at the probable prices of their principal products. To rely on commodity payments and programs for supporting prices is not likely to continue to work; the problem must be attacked through reduction in overemployment in agriculture.

(3) Provide an adequate farming base for all who remain in farming and facilitate the shifting of the energies of some or all of the workers not needed in agriculture to non-farm occupations.

It is envisioned, also, that specific actions will be needed to improve public facilities, such as schools, roads, hospitals, social security, to be on a par with urban opportunities and services.¹⁸

3. FARMERS' ORGANIZATION PROPOSALS. Though governmental systems of organization are being developed to meet immediate needs for the postwar era, yet much will be left undone unless rural organizations and their members take an active and effective part in war programs and postwar planning.

Farmers' organizations have recognized the need for planning and a clear national agricultural policy. Other national groups, such as the American Country Life Association, the National Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, and the National Planning Association, have made statements and have urged widespread discussion. "It's later than we think: We have time to plan—but not much!" is the admonition of the National Planning Association.¹⁹

a. The Farmers' Union feels that farmers and government must cooperate; that farmers need to use the instrument of government

¹⁸ "What Peace Can Mean to American Farmers' Agricultural Policy." Washington: Misc. Pub. 589, U. S. Printing Office, 1945, pages 39-41. See also J. Frederick Dewhirst and Associates, "America's Needs and Resources." New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1947, pages 619-625.

¹⁹ "Dare Farmers Risk Abundance?" Washington: National Planning Association, Pamphlet No. 56, February 1947, page 7.

to gain many of their objectives. The Farmers' Union proposal is to form county agricultural committees in every county, composed of farmers who are freely elected by at least 50 per cent of the farmers in each area in which each committeeman is to be elected, supplemented where desirable by township committees similarly constituted. "To the county committee shall be submitted annually a plan for each farm in its area (that will) protect the interest both of local farmers and of society at large in a healthy agriculture."²⁰ The plan calls for representation on the national committee by the office of the Secretary of Agriculture. A state committee representative of all major agricultural interests would be elected from among county committee members. County committee members would also elect every two years a National Farm Price Committee to be the bargaining agent for all farmers. Included in the Union's plan, also is a program for a national land policy, aimed at placing all farm land into sound economic units operated by individual or co-operating farm families. Moreover, any program for full employment must come through decentralized planning. Finally, freedom of inquiry on the part of government scientists, social and physical alike, should be safeguarded; the social sciences should share equally with the physical sciences, including provision for training and scholarships, according to the Farmers' Union.

b. The American Farm Bureau Federation, in its 1947 resolutions, supported decentralization of program planning and operation with authority in bona fide local, district and state farmer committees. Informational, educational, and research work of such committees should be done by those agencies which can best conduct such programs.²¹ In order to simplify governmental procedure and organization, cut administrative expenses, and still provide for effective programs, the AFBF would transfer the educational, informational, technical, demonstrational, and advisory services of the Soil Conservation Service to the Extension Service, its research

²⁰ "Agriculture in the Service of Mankind." Denver: The Program of the National Farmers Union, 1946, pages 6-8.

²¹ Resolutions adopted at the 29th AFBF Annual Convention, as reported in the American Farm Bureau Federation Official News Letter, Dec. 27, 1947, pages 1-6.

functions to the Experiment Stations, and assign educational and information assistance given to farmers by the Production Marketing Administration and its county offices to the Extension Service.²²

c. The National Grange, in its 81st (1947) annual convention, urged consolidation and coordination of federal agencies in order to centralize authority, eliminate duplication, and obtain maximum efficiency. State advisory committees should be patterned after a national coordinating committee. State and federal guidance and assistance are urged in the development of sound, long-range adjustment programs for areas where changes in agricultural production had created serious social or economic problems. The Grange is opposed to corporate type farming and urges education to encourage appreciation of family type farms.²³

d. The heads of farmers' organizations in the United States have met frequently to clear on national policies in which they were in virtual agreement. In 1947 an agreement was reached, for example, by leaders of the Farm Bureau, the National Grange, and the National Council of Farmers' Cooperatives, on issues of importance to agriculture. Some of these included the creating of an international trade organization with representatives from agriculture, industry and labor cooperating in making its policies; and the promotion of an economy of abundance, which for agriculture means greater utilization of farm products through the improvement of diets and living standards, finding more industrial uses, and enlarging world trade and commerce, these before resorting to the use of emergency measures such as marketing quotas, acreage controls, and loan and purchase programs. In opposing cuts in proposed federal expenditures of 1947, they recognized the importance of school lunch programs, rural electrification, and research and marketing activities of government.²⁴

e. The Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities recognizes that the problem of getting people generally to take part in planning and policy making in a democracy is largely an educa-

²² Official News Letter, AFBF, April 16, 1947.

²³ National Grange Monthly, January, 1948, pages 9, 10 and 17.

²⁴ Official News Letter, AFBF, *op. cit.*

tional problem. "What is required is a mechanism whereby farm people can state their needs. If the most feasible solutions call for action crossing state lines, then so far as possible they should represent a synthesis of state and local programs. . . . The United States Department of Agriculture, the Land-Grant colleges, and the national farm organizations all have the objective of improving agriculture and rural living, but they face the challenging need of working together more effectively, as well as encouraging greater participation in their counsels by grass-roots farm people." The proposals of the Land-Grant College Postwar Committee include, therefore:

(1) A permanent national agricultural policy committee composed of representatives from the Land-Grant colleges, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the national farmers organizations;

(2) State agricultural policy committees composed of leading farm men and women, as well as representatives of the Land-Grant colleges and other agricultural agencies;

(3) County groups which will represent the interests of all farm people. Members of such groups, selected on the basis of their ability to contribute to the development of agricultural programs, should include representations of all farmers' organizations, agencies, or groups, and should reflect the point of view of all important types of agriculture, geographic sections, and income levels found in the county. Such groups would present issues for discussion to all interested local groups, the goal being as nearly as possible to reach all farm people in the county.²⁵

f. The American Country Life Association has endeavored to meet the challenge. It has called attention to the human and social inadequacies of country life. It has stimulated other movements to improve rural life, such as the Catholic Rural Life Conference, the Rural Department of the National Education Association, regional, state, and local country life conferences and associations, and youth movements of various kinds. It has provided some of the best

²⁵ "Postwar Agricultural Policy." Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, 1944. Available from any of these institutions.

country life literature available today. It has given inspiration and a breadth of vision to leaders in country life. It has brought leaders of farmers' organizations, churches, educational associations, governmental agencies, and similar groups together to discuss country life issues and to come together on common ground. It has been in almost constant contact with other organizations and agencies interested in country life. The movement is advancing in its various phases. The church groups are under way, the farm organizations and cooperatives know that they can, and must, work together, and to seek counsel with labor. The rural education program is widespread, and many purely rural life conferences are vital to the improvement of country life. The trend is toward greater attention to the *quality* of human and group relationships in rural life.

The American Country Life Association recognizes that the most important problem in rural life is the development of better human and group relationships in the rural community. A unity of approach is essential if this movement is to help to grow small communities. "We must work together on a nation-wide basis; on a state-wide scale in every one of the states; but equally important, we must work together in counties and communities.

"Conferences on the state and regional basis can lay the groundwork for cooperative action in counties and communities. They can be the means of making cooperative plans to get the specific jobs done that need to be done. Then there must be a division of labor. Each group or agency must take its full responsibility for doing the kind of work it is in the best position to do, but it must do so with the full understanding and help of all other groups and agencies. Only thus can we prevent confusion and conflict among the numerous governmental agencies and voluntary organizations that have grown up. Only thus can we avoid reaching only the willing few. Only thus can we serve all of the people in our growing communities."²⁶

²⁶ "Rural Life in a Changing World." Champaign, Illinois: Garrard Press, 1946, pages 5-6.

g. The National Planning Association, a non-profit, non-political organization established in 1934, devoted to planning American agriculture, business, labor, and government, believes that "Planning a useful economic program for postwar farming means taking farm leaders, Congressmen, city leaders, and everybody else into the picture." It urges that "farm groups everywhere, from community clubs on up, get to work on these questions inside and outside of agriculture." It seems to think that farmers do dare risk abundance if

(1) Industry and labor prove they are willing to risk abundance,, too ;

(2) Some kind of income insurance for agriculture is provided, in the form of an expanded Food Stamp plan, and in some guarantees of price and income.

Then farmers can: drop the AAA, since it was difficult to run and didn't work too well ; modify commodity loans based on 1910-1914 parity price, because it is apt to guide production in the wrong direction at times ; and revise price supports based on 1910-1914 parity price, because they, too, may guide production in the wrong way. Moreover, some farmers may also be willing to adopt some kind of forward pricing as a way of giving farmers price assurance a season ahead, of guiding farm production sensibly, and of achieving a balanced abundance. But if industry and labor are not willing to risk abundance, none of these solutions may be adequate.²⁷

One member of the committee recognized that through technological advance and the risk of abundance we have really created problems in social organization for which we have no solution ; we should endeavor to discover and establish a kind of society that dares to risk abundance ; an investment of two billion dollars to subsidize social scientists in a research program might help find the answer.

The final test of all policies and planning will be in the degree to which farm people, especially the leaders in the neighborhoods and communities, are brought to think and plan seriously on the nation's agricultural and rural-life problems ; and the extent to

²⁷ "Dare Farmers Risk Abundance?" *Op. cit.*, pages 47-52.

which all rural organizations are made to feel a part of and responsible for helping plan and form national policies. If the people through a million local leaders feel they have a part in such efforts, they will indeed be the peoples' plans.

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QUESTIONS

1. Trace the influence, in general, of farmers' organizations on national policy.
2. What characterized the industrial revolution in agriculture? How was it different from the revolution in industry?
3. Indicate the policies you think best (a) to bring about stability within agriculture, (b) to improve the position of agriculture in relation to other industries, and (c) to secure public interest in and effectiveness in carrying on a program of conservation.
4. How has government policy changed since 1930?
5. What are the essentials for a good national policy? What are the present "policies in action"?
6. Outline three methods of policy making. Which of these seems to you to be best? Why?
7. What should be the role of rural organizations in the making of national policy? Give reasons for your answer.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Outline what Schlisinger describes as the Agricultural Revolution.
2. Make a detailed study of the present policies affecting agriculture as discussed by Tolley in the 1941 Agricultural Yearbook.
3. Make a study of the resolutions of the Farm Bureau, Grange, The National Council of Farmers Cooperatives, and Farmer's Union as reported in their 1947 Proceedings to determine which relate to the making of national policies affecting agriculture.
4. Compare the above with the proposals of the American Association of Land-Trust Colleges and Universities and the American Country Life Association.
5. Analyze the need for human resources in agriculture as shown by the Twentieth Century Fund Report.

CHAPTER XXIV

RURAL VALUES AND NATIONAL WELFARE

A review of the objectives of most farmers' organizations will show a striking similarity in their basic aims: adequate farm incomes; "parity" with other groups in our society; family-sized farms; security; equal opportunities for education, culture and an enjoyable social life. Many of these can be found in one way or another in the statements of objectives of most rural organizations. In the present world crisis they are all anxious to do what they can to build a permanent peace. Moreover, farmers do not want to see the same or even similar conditions develop as came out of World War I. Efforts in the after-war period to maximize these common desires and to minimize the differences held by rural organizations should be exerted if conditions similar to those of the last two decades are to be forestalled. Emphasis, therefore, must be centered upon rural values which should be preserved and nurtured in agriculture and rural life; they are basic to agricultural planning and national and local policy making.

Values Important to Rural Organizations

"The great institutions in rural America," states O. E. Baker, "are the family, the church, the school, the farm organizations, the fraternal orders, and the Extension Service. The school and the Extension Service, both maintained by the state, are expanding their functions to meet urgent needs, while in the opinion of many the family, the church, and fraternal orders are not functioning as fully as in the past, though the need of their services is, apparently, greater than ever. Now, the voluntary institutions are associated with the spirit of freedom and sense of responsibility. Freedom is associated with democratic government and has promoted the progress of science. Sense of responsibility is associated with the accumulation of wealth and has also promoted the progress of science.

"There is a widespread trend in the occidental world toward seeking the solution of deep seated difficulties in economic devices

. . . economic reorganization alone cannot solve the profound problems of rural life and national welfare, much less can political reorganization do so. Though such reorganization can produce more favorable conditions for the solution of these problems, no mechanistic devices, no governmental machinery can solve these problems. The need . . . is a vitalizing spirit, arising from the acceptance of worthy ideals—a nationalistic or humanitarian conviction partaking of religious fervor. We must subordinate the temporal values now characteristic of urban life, and accept as our guide the more permanent values of rural life.”¹

No doubt similar philosophies have been expressed as the chief long-time objective of farmers' and rural organizations by their leaders. In too many cases the immediate, economic objectives have come to overshadow all the others, especially where pressure is put upon the organization leaders for building services which will maintain membership. The values, nevertheless, are there; to recognize them as the long-time objectives lying behind the immediate aims leads to stability and dignity in the organization. What, then, are rural values which should be preserved or nurtured? Some of them can be classified as those arising out of primary association; others through the innate inventiveness of rural people; and still others persisting because of what may be called preservative attitudes.²

PRIMARY ASSOCIATION. Farmers live close to the soil. . . . The love of the land and the care of crops in season and of livestock in times of adverse weather have taught the farmer to take little note of long hours and to concentrate on getting the job done. Youth in rural areas who get this habit and experience of work have a definite advantage over those, especially in cities, who do not have it. But primary association is related to mutual association with one's fellows. As has been seen this is at the basis of all educational,

¹ O. E. Baker, Ralph Borsodi, and M. L. Wilson, "Agriculture in Modern Life," Harpers, 1939, pages 180-181.

² The following section is a reprint from the author's article published in *The Christian Rural Fellowship Bulletin*, Sept., 1941, and briefed in *Social Progress*, Vol. XXXII, No. 8, April, 1942, pages 4-6.

social and cooperative activity developed in rural life. Mutual association has provided for individual and group advancement on a much larger and more complex scale than it was ever dreamed by the average person could take place. But mutual association still forms one of the primary rural assets; when deprived of their first-hand contacts with each other farmers are likely to become as materialistic as the most grasping of their city cousins.

INNATE INVENTIVENESS. Because they have been faced with so many unpredictable changes, farm people have always been more or less inventive. Food surpluses are essential to city growth, and land has become more productive because farmers, through their organizations and agencies, have constantly sought new ways of improving soil fertility, crop varieties, and animal breeds. Cities grow through exploitation of natural resources; the time is rapidly approaching when city as well as rural people must develop effective means of re-creating the resources which have been exploited, or of conserving those which cannot be re-created—the products of the soil, the forests, and the mines. Thus the creativeness and inventiveness of rural people are values to be nurtured.

PRESERVATIVE ATTITUDES. Farmers learn from nature to make their own decisions, often, necessarily, on the spur of the moment; to depend on their own resources; to be thrifty and frugal. Because mistakes are often costly, farmers are conservative. Independence in thought and act, self-reliance, thrift, frugality, and blunt honesty—these characteristics are a part of rural life.

THE FAMILY IDEAL. The most important group in rural life is the family. The ideal about which family life in rural areas is built, and which should be carried into and nurtured by other organizations and institutions, as described by Baker, are a desire for the reproduction of the race, the education of the child, and the transferring of wealth from generation to generation. It includes as well a recognition of the divine in man, the importance of the worth of the human soul, and the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, which is at the core of the democratic as well as the Christian way of life. This does not mean over emphasis upon individual rights; it means the development of a true loyalty

to the state and its government of, for, and by the people. Emphasis must be placed also, states Baker, upon the dignity of labor and upon the necessity for sacrifice.

A MODERN AGRARIAN PHILOSOPHY. To the above rural values must be added the importance of creating in rural life a modern agrarian philosophy. This means developing among farm people the knowledge and willingness not only of how to produce and market efficiently, but also of how to make the farm and the home the consuming center of music, drama, art, and literature as well as of material goods produced by the farm. The farm home may become the center, also, for the discussion of current issues and the development of a more effective community life. To become such a center the farm home must be the farmer's own. The family, as a unit, must produce and consume together; must be a unit in the development of school, church, and community life; must be assured of its right to maintain itself on the land from generation to generation. Thus the most distinctive rural values—the love and preservation of land, man, and the Christian way of life—can be nurtured not only for rural life, but for urban life as well.

Rural Values and World Peace

Freedom from want is an aspiration as old as mankind. Every Utopia man has conceived has included a place where food is plentiful and want no longer in existence. In modern times freedom from want has come to have a new meaning; it is within the reach of man. Modern science and technology—mass production, transformation of raw materials by chemistry, new management of life processes in agriculture, advances in medicine and physiology, including nutrition—give human beings a new control over natural resources. Knowledge on which these possibilities are based is by no means complete; it is only at its beginning, and progress far beyond anything now known is a reasonable expectation.⁹

Freedom from want means the conquest of hunger and the attainment of the ordinary needs of a decent, self-respecting life.

⁹ "The Work of the FAO." Washington: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1945.

The fulfillment of such basic needs will only create desire for other good things of life; "the dynamic force that makes an expanding economy possible is the desire for continued betterment—including leisure to enrich the mind and renew the spirit—which grows as elementary needs are satisfied."⁴

The peace of the world can be built upon this kind of freedom from want. The basic real wealth comes from the soil; it is from these who till the soil that come the surplus human stock, and more than 75 per cent of the world's people live in rural areas from which comes this surplus. The creation of wealth will not in itself necessarily result in the advancement of human welfare; rural areas have continued throughout history to create wealth, but they have become more and more impoverished. We have seen that we now have the techniques to create enough wealth so that everyone everywhere can have enough to eat and to wear and to have a roof over their heads. We are still far behind in the development of the right kind of *human relations* so that men everywhere can share more equitably in that wealth.⁵

FAO believes that the welfare of producers and the welfare of consumers is identical; hence the FAO has set itself to speak in world councils and international affairs both for those who produce—the farmers, the forest producers, and the fishermen—and for those who consume. Such international cooperation is essential to world peace; it can result in the more adequate creation of wealth and the more equitable distribution of it, especially of the basic necessities to life.

International, national, state, and county programs must be translated into action, not only on the international and national levels, but also in the community, neighborhood, and on the individual farm. The job cannot be done on any of the above levels by one organization alone or in its self interest. "Take rural education, for example: Farmers' organizations acting alone and independent of other organizations can have only limited effect on the moderni-

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ "Farm and Rural Life After the War." Lafayette, Ind.; Proceedings American Country Life Association, 1944, page 5.

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zation of schools, for good schools are of concern to all of the people in the community. So with improvement of health, conservation of soils, and the encouragement of family-sized owner-operated farms. To be effective the programs of rural organizations must be coordinated on the community as well as on broader levels." * If there is cooperation of the community level, it comes more easily on the county, state, national, and international levels. Man, his home, and his community are important in world affairs; men in communities must be led to see that they can help to build a peaceful world. The values men come to hold most dear—be they freedom from want or a desire for a better kind of life beyond the satisfaction of basic wants—will be the forces of great importance in the building of a world peace.

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