

R.Flake Shaw

Annual Report - February, 1947

History

The past year has been full of activities and beset with many problems affecting farm people. With the end of the war, we naturally expected restrictions to be removed and shortages to disappear. Instead of an easier situation, in many ways, these problems have been more acute, and harder to endure because the war was over.

The above mentioned conditions have made this a very busy year for your State Office.

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This report covers briefly some of the highlights of the North Carolina Farm Bureau for the past year. Our membership is now approximately 60,000 farm families and associate members. This represents an increase of 21,000 members. Since our effectiveness in every way depends on the strength of our membership, this is a great advance in Farm Bureau. This growth has been due to the fine support we have had from our loyal members back in the counties. Special credit should be given to the Ed. O'Neal Parity Club Members who are the Marines for farm bureau membership drives. We have added nine new counties in the last year and have had splendid increases in a large number of the old ones.

We have had one addition to our staff in the last year, Mrs. Dorothy Boswell, previously employed by the Southern Service Company.

We had the largest delegation of farm people in San Francisco attending the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention in the history of our State. Around 350 people travelled by special train all the way across the continent to lend their support to this important American Farm Bureau Meeting. We were proud to learn that North Carolina exceeded all other states in membership growth and that we are now the largest farm organization of any of the thirteen southern states.

Again this year, we have been able to set aside a little reserve which tends to further stabilize our Organization.

The North Carolina Farm Bureau is proud of its members who are serving in the ~~#####~~ General Assembly from their respective counties. A very large number of important committees are headed by members of our official staff.

There may have been times in the past and probably will be in the future when some of our members who do not look at the broad picture might feel inclined to think they are not getting much for their membership. I realize that if we expect to hold our 80,000 members mentioned above and to obtain the 100,000 members which we have set as a goal for this year, we must maintain a sound business-like agricultural program. To do this, I think it is highly important that we look rather carefully at the economic picture and try if possible to determine just where ~~we~~ we are weak in our basic principles and then try ~~if possible~~ to focus the attention of our membership on these important points. As I observe the picture at this time, the two most important aspects of our entire farm economy are to do a good educational job, ~~which~~ ^{to properly represent the} ~~if properly~~ ^{an educational program} applied would emphasize, ~~that~~, the importance of agriculture to the economic welfare of our nation as a whole in providing farm people with sufficient income to purchase industrial goods that would help stabilize labor, industry and the consumption of raw material. Beyond that, in the field of education, we have the responsibility of trying to educate the farmers of the other sections of the country on the importance of protecting the type of Agriculture that we have to live with in the South that cannot be liquidated from year to year and is highly susceptible to over-production and the loss of foreign markets, all of which go to make up a most difficult situation as we attempt to adjust our great national agricultural economy. Furthermore, and in many ways just as important, we need to educate our membership on the type of program that the Farm Bureau should do that will mean most to them. In order to do this job, through out limited resources and personnel, we are forced to depend to a very large extent on written matter supplied by the state and national offices

interest of farm people as well as of government

and voluntary leadership in county organizations who will help to amplify the importance of each member reading very carefully such material as we are able to supply, dealing with these broad fundamental principles. In connection with this statement, I would like to mention the importance of consistency in membership. When the mailing address of a member/is once established and he begins to receive his mail, he is not apt to have much trouble unless he goes off the mailing list and then has to be renewed, all of which is very expensive for the State Office and sometimes means that he will miss some of the most important news items coming out for the year.

This brings me to the subject of legislation, which I think in many instances, is of ~~far~~ more importance to the individual farmer, in that beginning about 20 years ago we began to write laws that would remove the money from the pockets of one group of people to that of another, independently of the inevitable laws that had once governed our Nation. Time will not permit my going into much detail on this particular subject. I will only mention two or three of the highlights of the American Farm Bureau's Record of accomplishment in this field. First, I wish to quote from a statement of Congressman Clarence Cannon, taken from the Congressional Record ^{annex 6, 1947} in which he said, with reference to the 85% of parity loan legislation, "Who secured the legislation guaranteeing the farmer 85 per cent of parity. Ask Senator Bankhead of Alabama, who led the remarkable battle for that legislation, and he will tell you that without Ed O'Neal and the Farm Bureau it could not have been passed." I am wondering how many of our farmers know how much of the legislation since that time has been tied to this basic principle. This act changed the price of cotton overnight from 9 to 16¢, moving that amount of money from the speculative trade into the pockets of farmers. In our own state of North Carolina, and in the immediate past, the tobacco market of 1946, a stabilization program upheld by this principle, sponsored by the North Carolina Farm Bureau, and headed by one of our own men, Carl T. Hicks, Chairman of the Tobacco Committee of our Organization, has added hundreds of thousands of

dollars to the income of farm families this year. The only way legislation of this type can possibly be obtained is through ~~the~~ organized help ~~of~~ on a national scope. If our membership could only understand the importance of being able to delegate their strength and give their cooperation, ~~they would not be able to~~ ^{by accepting} ~~accept~~, first, the ideals for which the organization stands, ~~and~~ ^{second} its principle of operation, and, third, its democratic processes, ~~being of sufficient~~ ^{they would realize} importance to justify them to not only maintain their membership but to work for an increased membership, inspired by the determination against any odds or repercussions that might develop in succeeding years to see that farm people would be able to share proportionately in the income of our great nation.

that this is of sufficient

In closing, may I say that as the organization moves forward with such a program, it is my belief that one of the greatest opportunities and responsibilities of the North Carolina Farm Bureau would be to assume leadership that reaches into every county of this state in an effort to reconvert and bring about an uncompromising conviction of the American people that you cannot bring in prosperity by discouraging thrift. You cannot help small men by tearing down big men. You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich. You can't get out of trouble by spending more than your income. You can't further the brotherhood of man by inciting class hatred. You cannot establish sound security on borrowed money. You cannot build character and courage by taking away a man's independence, and you cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves.

I would like to express to President Eagles, our Board of Directors, Business Advisory Committee, Ed O'Neal Club Members, County Officers and the entire membership, my heartfelt thanks and the appreciation of the State Office for your fine support. This 60,000 farm families and business associates make a great team working together. This is your organization, and we are a part of the great American Farm Bureau, with 1,128,000 farm families, reaching forty-five states and Puerto Rico. The part we play in the National Picture will be

determined by how well you keep informed and the interest you take in helping us to grow. For in the final analysis the number of members we have will determine our ability to meet the challenge in the future.

Whereas, we are asking the Governor of North Carolina to call a special session of the Legislature to enact a law enabling North Carolina to cooperate in a compact with other flue-cured tobacco growing States, for the purpose of controlling production; and

Whereas, such compact would need the authorization of the Congress of the United States; and

Whereas, such Legislation is absolutely necessary for the protection of the growers of flue-cured tobacco and the general welfare of the State as a whole; therefore,

Be it resolved; That we, the Temporary Officers of the North Carolina Farm Bureau Federation, urge our Senators and Congressmen, in Washington, to do everything humanly possible to secure at once the enactment of this Federal Legislation; and

Be it further resolved: That we express to our Senators and Representatives in Washington, our hearty appreciation for the wonderful way they have worked and secured Legislation for the benefit of the growers in North Carolina, and to express to them our sincere desire that they continue to work as a unit in securing this supplementary Legislation to the Soil Conservation Program, the President of the United States has recently signed.

Signed:

J. B. Patrick
W. W. Bagles
W. W. Bagles
J. B. Patrick
R. F. Everett

The above motion was made by J. B. Patrick, seconded by W. W. Bagles and unanimously carried. *Wash.* *Tark*