FARMERS DEMAND IMMEDIATE RELIEF

Executive Secretary of Their Organization Tells of Their Plans.

WANT EVICTIONS TO CEASE

Meeting in Washington to Work Out Their Thoroughgoing Program.

NOT SURPLUS, THEY ASSERT

Neither do they Consider “Surplus” Crops Unemployed Want but Cannot Buy.

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 6.—The farmers of the nation, converging upon Washington to frame their own proposals for immediate relief from the burden of tax they feel which they are now being crushed.

Western farmers of pioneer stock have come here to save the land which they hold only by a legal hold on the wilderness, at the price of long struggles with blizzards, sand storms and drought. The Washington convention urges the farmers from other sections of the country in a nation-wide movement to make their voice heard to outlaw farmers’ tax, and to guarantee this by a binding vote on the subject.

The agricultural depression, beginning with the great of the general economic depression, has seen the result a fall in the relative prices of the products. It likewise has seen the rise of an over-powering farm indebtedness upon which Secretary of Agriculture Hyde puts at more than $9,000,000,000.

This fact was at the bottom of the great farm strike which raged in the Midwest earlier this year. Out of this strike came the call of the rank and file farmers for a nation-wide confluence of all farmers to formulate a force large enough to carry the movement.

The farmers meeting in Washington will work out their own program, but the executive of its central executive, delegates know beforehand that the program will be thorough-going.

Want a Monoratorium.

They will insist on legislation which, will definitely abolish farmer’s taxes on farm debts during the emergency. They want a law which will declare evictions illegal, and the usurious rates for non-payment of debts illegal.

For tax relief they do not want a sales tax which merely shifts the burden from the land to the shoulders of the mass of consumers, which means on the consumers themselves. They will ask either that this mortgageor that state and local government, or some less process, not come to taxes or that farmers living definitely below a decent standard of living shall be exempt from taxes.

The farmers are not satisfied with a promise of a voluntary domestic allotment plan when the Democrats control the House. As some 620 professional farm leaders are found in the House alone, a national emergency exists, and this is a time for emergency action. That means immediate relief, not some chop-leaf hope, not “make the tariff effective” several years hence. In many States of the Middle West the farmers already have begun to put a relief program into action. Anton Rosenberg, a farmer of Madison County, N.Y., and vice president of the Farmers’ National Bank Association, has been telling us how the farmers of Madison County have prevented eviction of their impoverished fellow-farmers by going in large numbers to the bankers or Sheriffs and insisting that the farmer be allowed to stay on the land until interest and mortgage can be paid. Rosenberg is a member of the committee which called this conference.

While the agricultural economists, notably Professor E. G. Nourse, suggest that three-quarters of the farmers are in surplus condition and are not released from this condition because of production, Rosenbery knows that this already is going to have to be achieved in the next several years.

Middle Man Is Blamed.

The three-quarters of the farmers whose names are not as an economist calls them “surplus” farmers, blame themselves as such. Neither can they consider their crops as surplus when they know that there are millions of unemployed who lack the very things which they produce and cannot sell. It was the recognition of this ironical situation which led the farmers of Iowa to give milk to the unemployed of Sioux City during the depression.

This note already has been struck in preliminary work of the conference. The farmers insist on higher prices, but they are not willing that these higher prices come from the suppression of the supply of the product. They declare their price relief must come because of the shortage of the supply. This must spread which goes to the middle men, in milk as well as in grains and other foodstuffs.

The farmers realize that long-term credit is not their only problem. Almost the entire production is made on credit—seed and feed credits, merchant credit, or “Turning hens,” as it is called in the East. This ends here. The Government has to fill the gap made by the failure of many small hens and merchants who formerly had advanced this type of credit.

A “Wooden-Shoes” Existence.

For the coming year the farmer knows that no such credit is anticipated by Federal authorities.

In the hard times available from the farmer sources, the farmers face the prospect of making no crops for lack of credit. This means falling back to a live-at-home program, with hardly enough to live on, and nothing to cloth and feed credits, and “Turning hens,” as it is called in the East. This means, he has taken matters into his own hands, because he knows that no one else can do the job as well as he can.

Homes before Congress, therefor, with the fact that the farmers face the but upright and with a challenge, because he feels that what he seeks is every right to receive.