

SCORED MR. CREWS

State Alliance's President Goes For Him

IN HIS ANNUAL ADDRESS

Chopping Out the Weeds From Around the Cotton Plant—Officers Elected—Tie Trust.

A great many members of the State Farmer's Alliance thinking that the body would convene in annual session at noon yesterday instead of 8:30 last evening came in on the early trains yesterday morning. Most of them spent the forenoon in meeting the several State officers and in every direction they were discussing the possibilities and probabilities of the senatorial campaign more as citizens than as alliance men, for their order is supposed to be strictly non-political. It would be hard to reflect the various views of the situation expressed.

Secretary Reid was early on the scene and was busy yesterday getting all his reports in shape to be presented to the meeting. The reports received by him from all over the State indicated that the county organizations are being well maintained.

Mr. Wilborn, it is said, being at present vice president of the State organization, will be made president to succeed Mr. Keitt. President Keitt arrived yesterday afternoon. Congressman Stokes is here to attend the meeting and present a report of a special committee appointed at the last session to look into certain matters relating to the State exchange. Among the other notables seen here yesterday were Col. J. D. M. Shaw of Laurens, H. H. Crum of Barnwell, ex-President M. L. Donald of Greenville, who it is said will oppose Latimer for Congress next year; Mr. W. N. Elder of York and a great many others.

The Exchange and the Trust.

On Tuesday evening the annual meeting of the board of directors of the State alliance exchange was held. Nearly all the alliance men purchase their supplies through the exchange, and at this meeting Col. D. P. Duncan presented his annual report showing a surprising volume of business done during the past year and dealing with the fight against the cotton tie trust. This report will be transmitted to the State Alliance. It reads as follows:

To the President, J. A. Sligh, and the Board of Directors of the Exchange:

Gentlemen—I beg leave to submit this, my annual report as manager of the Farmers' Alliance Exchange for the year ending July 24th, 1897.

The past year's business of your exchange will compare very favorably with that of preceding years.

The bureau work, as we may term it, has increased until now it is one of the leading features of the exchange business.

To give you some idea of the way in which the exchange is used as a bureau of information we received during the past year, 3,530 letters, all of which were on business matters.

The members of the organization use the information furnished them to bring about competition in their local markets, and are much benefitted in this way. We received 995 orders for goods, which we think were filled in a satisfactory manner to the members.

We sent out a weekly price current through The Cotton Plant, which contains the wholesale of all articles commonly used on our farms.

Just one year ago we were confronted with the fact that the entire production of cotton ties had passed under the control of one

combination and extortionate prices were demanded for them. In my report to the State Alliance last year I recommended that we use wire or some other substitute. The State alliance took such action and your exchange was instructed to see what could be done in the way of some substitute.

After considerable correspondence and a personal visit to New York we arranged with the Washburn & Moen Mfg. company, Worcester, Mass., for 10,000 bundles of wire ties. The Cincinnati Wire Fence Co. made quite a lot of wire ties which were used in this State, and in the southwest; about 15,000 bundles were used during the cotton season.

The combination on cotton ties was so well managed that we were not aware of it until it was so late in the season and we were at a great disadvantage in the fight made against this imposition.

From our correspondence with the alliance in North Carolina, Georgia and Texas much interest was manifested, and the reason more active steps were not taken in these States was for want of business organization.

We are assured, however, by them that if the tie trust kept up they would certainly join us another year.

In November, 1896, the Illinois Steel Co. sent one of their agents to Columbia to see us and to know if they would make flat hoop ties (they had never made any) at the old prices if we would use them, they at the same time stated that they were not in the cotton tie trust and had refused to be a party to it when invited to do so. In March we signed up a contract for 5,000 bundles of ties, Columbia delivery, for 70 cents per bundle; this was for the same tie that the trust demanded \$1.35 per bundle just one year ago.

An average crop of cotton for South Carolina is 750,000 bales. One bundle of ties will pack five bales of cotton, and it therefore takes 150,000 bundles of ties to pack up an average crop.

This, we see, with a demand of 65 cents per bundle, the combination propose to tax the cotton planters of the amount of \$97,000, when they conceived that they had us at their mercy.

I do not want to make claim for more than is due the action of the alliance organization in our State, but the facts are before you.

One of the largest iron manufacturing in the United States without any solicitations on our part sent their representative to see us to make arrangements for cotton ties for the present crop at figures as low or lower than ties have ever been delivered in the interior.

I firmly believe this was due to the existence of the organization we have. I have reported the matter somewhat in detail as an illustration of the great advantage there is in having your business organization in proper shape when any emergency arises.

I believe I can say without fear of contradiction that after the action of your State Alliance, all the second hand and pieced ties, together with all the wire ties our farmers could get, were used on our last crop, and less bundles of new ties were used in proportion in South Carolina than any other cotton State. Your Alliance organization did it.

I desire to call your attention to a light weight tie that is offered on the market this season. I am not prepared to say that it is a fraud, because it is offered on the market at just what it is, and no farmer need allow himself deceived by it. It is a tie that weighs 30 pounds to the bundle of 30 ties as against 45 pounds to the bundle. Where the price of the 45-pound tie is fixed at 75

cents the light weight tie is sold at 62½ cents per bundle.

We all know that we have to account for the 6 per cent. tare and it stands to reason that if this is not consumed in some full weight covering that the farmer will lose it in actual cotton.

To illustrate: a bundle of 45-pound ties at 75 cents; you sell your cotton for 7 cents and there is 45 pounds of ties at a cost of 75 cents; you sell it for seven times 45 or \$3.15, less the 75 cents or net \$2.40. The 30 pound ties at 62½ cents, sold at 7 cents, gives \$2.10, less the 62½ cents cost, or net \$1.47½ cents, and you have lost 92½ cents on every bundle of the light ties you use. This is what I suppose might be termed fair and legitimate robbery, as you are informed before hand. A 500 pound bale of cotton on its arrival in Liverpool, the market that fixes the price of cotton for the world, is assessed 6 per cent. for tare, which simply means 30 pounds to the bale, therefore you should put on a cheap covering as near this 30 pounds as possible and whenever you fail to do so you rob yourself.

Use only heavy bagging and standard ties; this puts your cotton in marketable shape.

I think the thanks of the alliance organization of the State are due Messrs. Washburn & Moen Mfg. company of Worcester, Mass., for their action in aiding us in our fight on the cotton tie trust and we earnestly urge our members to make use of the products of these manufacturers whenever they meet them in the markets.

In conclusion we will report what we have urged upon the members of the organization in season and out of season, that in this age of combinations that you should stand by your organization.

We have no fight to make on any trade, profession or business interest; simply to look after our own affairs; try to impose on no one, and don't allow yourself robbed. Consolidate your orders for fertilizers, your machinery, your agricultural implements through your exchange and deal directly through it for these things with the manufacturers.

The cash business done by the exchange the past year amounted to \$63,864.41 and this was done at a cost of less than 5 per cent. for all current expenses.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

D. P. Duncan, Mgr.

The alliance met at 8:30 o'clock. The following officers were present: Jos. L. Keitt, president; J. C. Wilborn, vice-president and lecturer; J. W. Reid, secretary and treasurer, and W. N. Elder, member of executive committee.

The following were appointed for the session: J. L. Smith, chaplain; W. N. Elder, steward; H. D. Metcalf, doorkeeper; W. H. Stuart, assistant doorkeeper; W. P. Whitman, sergeant-at-arms.

The following delegates were present:

Abbeville—J. S. Graves.
Aiken—R. H. Timmerman.
Anderson—J. P. Glenn.
Baranwell—H. H. Crum.
Colleton—L. E. Parler.
Florence—W. B. Gause.
Greenville—M. L. Donaldson.
Horry—James A. Lewis.
Kershaw—Wm. Holly.
Lancaster—J. R. Knight.
Laurens—O. P. Goodwin.
Lexington—J. W. Eargle.
Newberry—W. E. Lake.
Oconee—J. L. Smith.
Orangeburg—O. B. Riley.
Pickens—W. T. O'Dell.
Richland—E. P. Whitman.
Spartanburg—H. D. Metcalf.
Saluda—W. E. Bodie.
Union—J. F. Bailey.
York—W. H. Stewart.

The President's Address.

President Keitt read his annual address to the Alliance, as follows:

Brethren of the Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union of South Carolina: The work of the executive officers of this Alliance has been confined mainly to routine business the past year. Since the last meeting I had the pleasure, in company with Secretary Reid, of organizing Saluda county Alliance. The educational work by the State officers has been practically suspended on account of existing conditions, chiefly the political campaign of last year which absorbed the people's attention. The demand for lecturing has increased this month. This demand should be supplied where possible. The lecture work and our organ, The Cotton Plant, have heretofore been the two educational agencies to disseminate Alliance doctrines and maintain a medium of communication between our members. The conduct of The Cotton Plant since our last meeting has been a disgrace and an insult to the Alliance. I do not wish to be understood in making this assertion to cast an imputation upon the committee in charge of The Cotton Plant. I have no information that would warrant a criticism of the committee. The contract with Mr. J. T. Gantt was brought to our attention last year in the committee's report and was approved. A short time after the State meeting The Cotton Plant was not at my office. I addressed a letter stating the fact to The Cotton Plant at Spartanburg, but received no reply. I next wrote to Mr. J. T. Gantt personally and this letter met the same fate. I then communicated with Hon. W. D. Mayfield, as secretary of the committee, and stated the facts. Mr. Mayfield replied promptly and expressed surprise that I had not been getting the paper and kindly sent me a number of old copies. He also promised to have the paper sent. One copy was received after this time while edited by Gantt. I have since been informed that a number of subscriptions were paid in and the subscribers failed to get their papers.

Last April the committee transferred The Cotton Plant from J. T. Gantt to W. T. Crews of Laurens under a contract which has since been published. The first few issues were unobjectionable. In the issue of May 27 a sudden and radical change took place; the constitution of the Alliance was ignominiously trampled under foot and since that time the Alliance organ has been conducted as a degraded partisan sheet. Immediately upon reading the issue of May 27, I sent the editor the following letter:

Mr. W. T. Crews, Editor Cotton Plant, Laurens, S. C.

Dear Sir: I regret the necessity that requires me, as president of the State Alliance, to protest against the language and tone of the editorial department of The Cotton Plant of May 27. The attack upon Mr. McLaurin and further still the charge of treachery against a large number of gentlemen contained in what is called "Party movement" is not only unwarranted, but highly reprehensible in the organ of the State Alliance. If the committee in charge of The Cotton Plant does not place its veto upon it I shall consider the committee as unworthy the trust imposed in it by the State Alliance. This issue is totally at variance with your excellent editorial of May 6, from which I call your attention to the following extract:

"The Alliance should be non-partisan; that is we should welcome into our order and into our efforts men and women of every shade of political opinion and strive to unite every element of

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WINTHROP COLLEGE

SCHOLARSHIPS AND ENTRANCE EXAMINATION.

THE EXAMINATIONS for the award of vacant scholarships in Winthrop College and for the admission of new students will be held at the County Court House on August 13th at 9 A. M.

Applicants must not be less than 15 years of age. When scholarships are vacated after August 13th they will be awarded to those making the highest average at this examination. The cost of attendance including board, furnished room, heat, light and washing is only \$8.50 per month.

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D. B. Johnson, Rock Hill, S. C.

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