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The Mass Meeting Thursday

Splendid Addresses by President Smith, of the South Carolina Cotton Growers' Association, and President Moore, of the North Carolina Association--The Plan Fully Outlined for the Farmers to Realize Better Prices for their Cotton.

In accordance with announcement previously made in The News, a mass meeting was held here Thursday to hear an address by President E. D. Smith, of the State Cotton Growers' Association. Agreeably to the surprise of the audience, Mr. Smith was accompanied by President O. C. Moore, of the North Carolina Association. Both gentlemen, who are able and enthusiastic workers in the farmers' cause, made highly entertaining and instructive addresses, their remarks being replete with valuable information for the members of the cotton association and the public generally.

The meeting was held in the court house, and although the building was not full, the audience was a good and appreciative one. Notwithstanding the fact that this is a very busy time on the farms, a good many farmers were present, the various sections of the county being well represented by intelligent and progressive men.

Col. W. C. Hough presided and introduced the speakers, President Moore, of North Carolina, being the first. Mr. Moore made a plain, practical talk—full of meat—and was given the closest attention by his hearers. He pointed out some of the advantages which have been derived by the farmers of the South from the cotton association—how it has been instrumental in raising the price of cotton from a point greatly below the cost of production to something like remunerative figures—how it has been influential in increasing the use of cotton and cotton goods in other countries, and he explained how the association has made it possible for the farmers to dictate the price of the staple. He drew a graphic picture of the impoverished and distressed condition of the country in the days when the farmers were forced to sell their cotton as low as \$4.60 per hundred pounds—days that will never return if the farmers will but stand loyally by their present organization.

By reason of the admirable manner in which the farmers of North Carolina are organized, Mr. Moore said that in his county, Mecklenburg, the farmers realized over \$200,000 more for the cotton crop of 1905 than for any crop ever raised in that county. The various clubs worked together and kept the staple off the market until the price reached 11 cents.

Mr. Moore elaborated the plan devised by the national associa-

tion for ware-housing and holding cotton, the details of which have already been published in full in The News. In brief, as explained by Mr. Moore, the idea is to form a stock company in every county, capitalized upon the basis of \$5 for every bale produced in the county. For instance, a county raising 20,000 bales, the capital stock will be \$100,000. The money will not be sent out of the county, but will be placed by the company's officers in banks, to be drawn upon for erecting warehouses and for buying up "weak cotton," that is, cotton that the owners are obliged to sell regardless of the price. All cotton so bought will be held until the price reaches the figures fixed by the association; the profits realized to be divided among the stockholders of the company. Farmers able to hold their cotton and not wanting to sell may at any time store their cotton in the warehouses and, if they so desire, have money advanced on same.

Mr. Moore said that some people were rather skeptical about the farmers being able to successfully finance and manage such a company, but he hooted at the idea of their not being fully competent to do so. So far as Lancaster is concerned he said he knew that there are many farmers in this county capable of managing such an undertaking. He said that much of Charlotte's growth today is due to Lancastrians who have moved there since the war and have become prominent in banking, commercial, industrial and other lines.—He mentioned the Millers, the Heaths, the Davidsons, T. M. Mayer and others who have greatly aided in the upbuilding of Charlotte. He said that much of the credit of Mecklenburg's fine macadam roads is due to Mr. Mayer, who has been a member of the board of supervisors for a number of years.

PRESIDENT SMITH'S SPEECH.

Mr. Moore was followed by Mr. Smith, who delivered one of his characteristically able and forceful speeches. His address was practically along the lines of an interview given out by him a day or two ago as follows:

Since the Birmingham Convention I have been engaged in organizing the work of the Southern Cotton association. I have just completed a tour through Alabama and Georgia. The work has been the most successful of any yet accomplished: committees have been appointed to solicit subscriptions, to organize warehouse and holding companies for the purpose of locally financing the cotton crop and maintaining a profitable price to the grower.

At every place visited the plan adopted by the Birmingham convention for organizing companies, for building warehouses, negotiating loans and concentrating the cotton in the hands of a business committee has met with uniform approval. It is mani-

fest to every business man that cotton is the basis of our credit and is wholly our circulating medium.

It is absurd to expect the negro and the poor and dependent white producer to be able to maintain the proper value for this article upon which every interest in the South is dependent, when those who buy it from them, up to now, have fixed the price, representing the organized brain and capital of the world and whose business it is to get the article as cheaply as possible.

The North, British America and Europe consume about 85 per cent of our cotton crop. Hence 85 per cent of our buyers represent foreign capital. Now is it not an absurd proposition to leave to the poor debt-ridden, disorganized producer of cotton to go up against the representatives of Northern, Canadian and European capitalists, with unlimited resources, perfect organization and expect them, the poor, disorganized, to win and bring into the South in conflict with the world's richest and shrewdest anything like the full value of the cotton crop, upon which we all are dependent? There is not a bank, mercantile establishment or any business vocation or avocation in the South that is not dependent directly on the currency brought into circulation by the sale of the cotton crop.

Now it is manifestly the height of folly, from a business standpoint, to leave to the poor and disorganized producer to determine in conflict with the shrewdest foreign buyer the amount of money that shall be put into circulation in the South, to determine the deposits in our banks, the amount of goods to be sold by our merchants, the comforts and conveniences of our homes, the education of the boys and girls of the South and the development of our resources, the establishment of our manufacturing plants to manufacture the raw material in the South by the capital of the South so as to obtain not only the profit on the raw material, but the greater profit on the finished article, to develop our water power so as to light our cities, run our factories and connect our towns and villages with trolleys, to macadamize our roads.

When all of these could be easily within our reach if the capitalists in every county in the South were to join forces with the producers of our cotton, and on wise, conservative business lines formulate a simple, cooperative plan by which a uniform price could be fixed upon cotton, which price would include the cost of production and profit to the grower and profit to the company financing it plus the necessary carrying charges.

As it is now, and has been for years, the merchant and banker and business men of the South who furnish the goods and capi-

tal to the producer of cotton have actually contributed to the depression of the price of cotton by demanding from the producers a settlement of their accounts without regard to the price that cotton may be bringing at the time that these accounts fall due, while those who are making the price are keenly alive to the fact that these accounts are being pressed, and that the holder or owner of the cotton has no other means of meeting these obligations save his cotton. Hence, by depressing the price just at the time that these accounts are due, and by the holders of these good accounts pressing for their payment, the whole amount has actually contributed to the depression of the very article upon which the commercial expansion of the South is dependent.

It is to relieve this very situation that the Southern Cotton association was formed; and it is fighting to bring all the interest in the South to realize the necessity for mutual cooperation. The demand for cotton products have advanced in the last few years far beyond the advance in production.

The amount of cotton goods consumed today is limited by the spindle capacity of the world. The spindles of the world running full time are not able to meet the demand for cotton goods. The prices paid today for manufactured cotton goods are higher than they have been since the war period. Mills could easily pay a much higher price for the raw material than is now paid and still clear a greater profit per bale than the producer is now obtaining.

As an evidence of the demand for cotton goods and the profit that is in its manufacture, in Lancashire district, England alone new mills representing new companies aggregating 10,000,000 spindles have been organized and constructed in seven years, or since 1900. A like increase is indicated in other European mill districts. In the Northern and Southern districts of America and in Canada, as one mill president expressed it when asked why the mills of the world in view of the unprecedented profit being made by them, did not pay more for the raw material, replied, "We don't have to." It is up to the South to combine her business interests to make them "have to."

The Southern Cotton association does not propose—nor does it desire—to become an element of predatory power, but simply to preserve the intrinsic and competitive value of cotton, her practical monopoly of the world's necessity. The purchasing world organizes its exchanges, sends out its buyers into every market, concentrates all its energy and capital in systematizing and concentrating its power for the purpose of controlling the market for its best interest. The South, or the producer of cotton, and those dependent upon him

build no warehouses, employ no sellers, organize no exchanges, do not systematize or concentrate their capital, but leave to the individual to dispose of his property as best he may, and the net result is the South's poverty.

Our plan for organizing is to build warehouses, elect a board of directors and a business manager, and, as cotton is practically money, allow the individual to hypothecate his cotton to these companies and receive a loan sufficient to meet his pressing obligations, these companies to concentrate their holdings and sell to the purchaser at a price representing, as said already, a legitimate profit to the producer and a legitimate profit to the financier, plus the necessary cost of warehousing, insuring and storing. The modern facilities for transportation and communication makes the organization of the cotton interest of the South easily practical and wonderfully remunerative.

I beg the business men and the newspapers of the South to study the problem and help us in our earnest effort to solve it.

A New Enterprise.

Cotton Warehouse and Holding Company, with Capital Stock of One Hundred Thousand Dollars, being Formed in Lancaster.

Immediately after the mass meeting here Thursday plans were gotten up for the organization of a cotton warehouse and holding company in Lancaster. The company will be formed under the laws of this State and will be known as "The Lancaster County Cotton Warehouse and Holding Company." The capital stock is to be \$100,000.00, divided into 20,000 shares of the par value of \$5 each. The warehouse will be located in the town of Lancaster.

About \$4,000.00 was subscribed as soon as the subscription papers could be drawn up, leading business and professional men as well as farmers taking stock. This is one of the most important movements that has been inaugurated in Lancaster in some time, one that means much for the best interests of the cotton producers of this county. Its success is assured by the character and standing of the men who are taking an active interest in the enterprise and who are subscribing liberally to its capital stock. All who are interested in the welfare of the farmers should support this movement. Every farmer who raises a bale of cotton should by all means become a stockholder.

Bishop James N. Fitzgerald, of the Methodist church, died in China this week.

Every grocery store should carry Argo Red Salmon. If the salesmen have not yet called on you, drop a card to the Alaska Packers Association, Atlanta, Ga., where our temporary advertising offices are located.