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The Granger Movement in Ill.

(1904)



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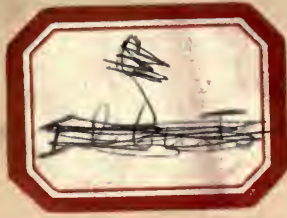
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By

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PRICE 35 CENTS

University Press  
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# University of Illinois

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## THE GRANGER MOVEMENT IN ILLINOIS.

### 1. *Introductory:—The Rise of the Grange.*

Of all the organizations that have flourished among farmers since the middle of the last century, none, from a social and economic standpoint, has equaled in importance the Patrons of Husbandry, more commonly known as the Grange. Although its immediate organization displays some peculiarities, it was the outgrowth of natural conditions, and its promoters had a mine of experience on which to draw in order to establish it on a solid basis. For even the farming class, though poorly situated for organization, had societies more than one hundred years old.

The new order came into being shortly after the Civil War. It was a favorable time for such a movement. For two decades a feeling of dissatisfaction had been spreading among the farmers. For a time it had found sufficient expression in the political agitation against slavery, but otherwise had played no important part in the economic growth of the nation. It was temporarily overshadowed by more vital questions, but gained new life in the west as railroad building progressed and increasing migration brought about more extensive competition among the farmers. This competition lowered the prices of their products, while at the same time their purchases had to be made at exorbitant prices. They were at the mercy of the middlemen, whom they were unable to oppose successfully owing to lack of organization, and because their own inertia had prevented them from undertaking to deal directly with the manufacturers.

The motives of the middlemen were not entirely selfish. That their operations brought injury to the farmer was rather their misfortune than their fault. They found the farmers poorly supplied with cash and were forced to sell on credit.

In this way a system of credit grew up which enabled the middlemen to hold the farmers' trade even though charging high rates for the supplies which they furnished.<sup>1</sup>

The railroads, too, were a source of irritation. At the beginning of the era of construction in the West the people were friendly to the railroads. Railroad building in the east and the opening of through lines of transportation in the few years before the war opened new markets for the western farmer and increased the demand for agricultural products. However, discriminations, high rates with their accompanying phenomenon of stock watering, and the attitude which the railroad managers assumed toward the shippers, together with a succession of sharp practices, gradually aroused the public and led to organized opposition.

Hostility to the middlemen and fear of the railroads were the main causes of the movement among the western farmers towards organization. In other sections of the country additional causes operated to produce a like result. The farmers of the south had been left in an unfortunate condition as a result of the Civil War. If we add to these causes of discontent, the general feeling of unrest commonly prevalent among the tillers of the soil, we have a sufficient explanation of the causes of the widespread movement among the farming classes, which resulted in the organization of the Patrons of Husbandry.

Such were the conditions when Oliver Hudson Kelley, a clerk in the Agricultural Department at Washington, was sent through several of the southern states on public business. Impressed by the unfortunate condition of the people, appreciating the power of united action, and seeing that there was no comprehensive organization of farmers, he began to plan the formation of such a combination as should unite in one body the great mass of farmers throughout the country. Upon his return to Washington, April 21, 1867, he enlisted the sympathy of a few friends who were interested in agricultural matters, and, resign-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. M. B. Hammond, *The Cotton Industry in the United States*—ch. V, on Agricultural Credit. (*Amer. Econ. Public. New Series, No. 1.*)

ing his position under the government, he devoted his time to planning such an organization and to perfecting for its use a "ritual of four degrees for men and four for women, unsurpassed, in my judgment, in the English language, for originality of thought, beauty of diction and purity of sentiment."<sup>1</sup> It is a ritual well calculated to exalt the occupation of the farmer in the minds of members. Kelley being a Mason, Masonic methods were copied extensively by the new order. As first organized the four degrees for men were, Laborer, Cultivator, Harvester, Husbandman. A lady friend of Kelley's suggested that women be admitted to the order with corresponding degrees. The suggestion was acted upon and thus, almost by chance, a feature was adopted which added much to the influence of the Grange. The four degrees for women at the beginning were, Maid, Shepherdess, Gleaner, and Matron. Other degrees, open to both men and women, were added as occasion demanded. The fifth degree, Pomona (Hope), is composed of Masters of subordinate granges and their wives who are Matrons. Past Masters and their wives who are Matrons are honorary members and eligible to office but not entitled to vote. Flora (Charity), is the name of the sixth degree. It is composed of the Masters of state granges and their wives who have taken the degree Pomona. Past Masters of state granges who have taken the degree Pomona are honorary members and eligible to office but not entitled to vote. The seventh and highest degree is Ceres (Faith). Members of the National Grange who have served one year therein may become members of this degree on application and election. The secret work of the order is under the charge of the members of this degree, who also sit as a court in all cases of impeachment of officers of the National Grange. Members of this degree are honorary members of the National Grange and are eligible to office therein but are not entitled to vote.

Several months were spent upon the constitution and ritual, and on December 4, 1867, the National Grange of the order

<sup>1</sup> D. W. Aiken, *The Grange—Its Origin, Progress and Purposes*, Special Report 2, Misc. Ser. U. S. Dept. of Agric. pp. 55-64.



Patrons of Husbandry was established at Washington with a membership of seven, "made up", as a writer for the *Popular Science Monthly* has put it rather sarcastically, "of one fruit grower and six government clerks, equally distributed among the Post Office, Treasury and Agricultural Departments,"<sup>1</sup>

The officers were elected for a term of five years.<sup>2</sup> For two years there were no additions to membership, and a full attendance of the original members was not always secured at the annual meeting. Indeed, at the third annual session, Worthy Master Saunders delivered his annual address in the presence of Secretary Kelley, his entire audience, and when through, asked the privilege of printing the same in the next morning's papers that each might buy some to distribute.<sup>3</sup> At the fifth annual session of the National Grange the original seven members were reinforced by the Grand Master of the Iowa State Grange, Dudley W. Adams.

Immediately after the organization of the National Grange, steps were taken to organize subordinate granges, and the territory selected for the first effort was the state of Minnesota. Accordingly, Mr. Kelley left Washington April 1st, 1868, for the accomplishment of this purpose. At this time the Grange was \$150 in debt, but Kelley was to receive a salary of \$2,000 a year besides his expenses, provided his receipts aggregated that amount. On his way westward he organized granges successively at Harrisburg, Fredonia, Cincinnati, and Chicago. The Chicago Grange, which was the first in Illinois, was organized in the office of the *Prairie Farmer*, in the latter part of April. From Chicago Kelley went to Minnesota where he succeeded in organizing a half a dozen granges by the close of the year. The

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<sup>1</sup> Charles W. Pierson, "Rise of the Granger Movement", *Pop. Sci. Mo.*, vol. 32, p. 199. The members were Wm. M. Ireland and O. H. Kelley (recently transferred from the Agricultural Dept.) of P. O. Dept., J. R. Thompson and Rev. John Trimble of the Treasury Dept., Wm. Saunders and Rev. A. B. Grosh of the Agricultural Dept., and F. M. McDowell, a vineyardist of Wayne, New York.

<sup>2</sup> Saunders, Master; Thompson, Lecturer; Ireland, Treasurer; Kelley, Secretary.—Special Report 2, Misc. Ser. U. S. Dept. of Agric. p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> Special Report etc., 2, p. 58.

Minnesota State Grange was organized on February 23rd, 1869. In Iowa, in 1869, he was still more successful, but the Iowa State Grange was not organized until January 12th, 1871. No charters were issued to a sub-grange unless at least nine men and four women were pledged as members, while the number of charter members was limited to thirty, at least ten of whom must be women. The initiation fee seems to have varied somewhat from time to time, but for the charter members was usually about three dollars for men and fifty cents for women. Men who joined later paid four to five dollars, and women two to three dollars, as a membership fee. The order grew slowly for several years. At the close of 1871 the secretary was able to report that the increase in membership had been four times as great in that year as in the year preceding. After 1871 the growth was more rapid and at the sixth annual session, January 8, 1873, delegates were present from eleven states. Four of these delegates were women. There were at this time twenty-three state granges.<sup>1</sup> During the year 1872 1,074 subordinate granges were organized, making, altogether, about 1,300. The next two years saw a still more rapid growth, 8,668 being added in 1873, and 11,941 in 1874, making a total of 22,000 granges with an average membership of a little over 30.<sup>2</sup> The grange was prospering, the treasury was full and there was a rush for membership. A feverish activity seemed to pervade the order. No undertakings were too big, no enterprises too grand, to be attempted. One in particular, carried on during its period of greatest activity,<sup>3</sup> but later given up on account of the expense, was of considerable importance. This was its system of monthly crop reports.<sup>4</sup> Blanks were sent from the office of the secretary to each of the subordinate granges in time to reach the local grange before its meeting, the first week in each month. The secretary of the subordinate grange was then enabled to

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<sup>1</sup> Special Report, etc. 2, p. 58

<sup>2</sup> Prairie Farmer, Mar. 31, 1877.

<sup>3</sup> Commenced in May or June, 1872. See Prairie Farmer, May 18, 1872.

<sup>4</sup> Special Report etc., 2, p. 62.

obtain the necessary data and return the required information. On the basis of these replies, the reports were compiled by the fifteenth of each month. In this way the Grange bulletins were issued before those of the Department of Agriculture and are said to have been more reliable.<sup>1</sup> This and other accomplishments gave a prestige to the order, so that newspapers and politicians became interested in it and the Grange became a factor in politics.

The inevitable reaction was not long in coming. The membership declined, the activity decreased. Various reasons were assigned for the decline. It is said that the Grange lacked a well defined purpose, that its energies were scattered, that it was unable to accomplish its undertakings and that in consequence, the enthusiasm of the members subsided. While such an hypothesis affords a partial explanation, it does not accurately or fully describe the conditions. The Grange did have definite objects, which, however, varied from time to time. By the founders and earliest members the social and educational features were emphasized. They desired to bring together the farmers and their families and to develop through this acquaintanceship that fraternal feeling so notoriously lacking among them. They aimed, moreover, to bring about a more intelligent and scientific cultivation of the soil.

The success of the movement, however, soon attracted idealists and disgruntled politicians, who came into it masked as farmers, each with his own plan for revolutionizing the world. The grangers, confident because of what they had accomplished, were ready to undertake new plans even though in the main they were visionary. As a consequence gigantic schemes of co-operation in buying and selling were undertaken and entrusted to inexperienced men. Partly because of overconfidence and mismanagement, partly because of the opposition of the middlemen, almost every attempt of this kind resulted in financial loss. These failures not only caused loss to

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<sup>1</sup> Special Report, etc. 2, p.62. Cf. "The Grange reports were costly and often unreliable but had proved valuable." C. W. Pierson Pop. Sci. Mo. 32: 369.



those immediately interested but also discredited the whole movement in the eyes of the public.

Moreover, undue political activity, partisan expressions on the tariff and currency,<sup>1</sup> together with radical and sometimes unwise railroad legislation, gradually brought about internal dissension. The farmer was inclined to place too much dependence on legislation and too little on self-help to accomplish the desired ends. Of course he did not grow rich immediately. In fact there was little sign of improvement in his condition. He was disappointed with the outcome and ignorant of the reason for the failure of his plans ; and seeing no prospect of securing more favorable results, he soon lost hope.

The discontent which had been growing for several years came to a head at the meeting held at Charleston, S. C., early in 1875. At this meeting every State Grange was represented, sixty-six members being present. There was heated discussion on several matters, but the contest found its chief expression on the financial methods of the National Grange, which by means of fees had accumulated thousands of dollars and had paid rather extravagant salaries to its officers.<sup>2</sup> At the end of the discussion it was voted to distribute the funds of the Grange among the subordinate granges in good standing. Accordingly about \$50,000 was distributed, or about \$2.50 for each grange.<sup>3</sup> Internal dissension increased during the next few years, many who had joined in the stirring days of 1873 and 1874 withdrew from membership, and many granges discontinued their meetings entirely. As there was less agricultural discontent in the country at this time few granges were organized. The receipts of the National Grange fell off and the salaries of the officers

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<sup>1</sup> Pop. Sci. Mo. 32:373. *Prairie Farmer*, May 9, 1874; Feb. 2, 1878; Oct. 19, 1878. See also Proceedings of a Convention of Farmers held at Bloomington Oct. 16-17, 1872.

<sup>2</sup> Master, \$2,000 per year; Secretary, \$2,500 per year.—Pop. Sci. Mo. 32:372.

<sup>3</sup> *Prairie Farmer* Feb. 20, 1875. Pop. Sci. Mo. 32:372.

had to be reduced.<sup>1</sup> Politicians showed less interest and the space devoted to grange topics in the newspapers gradually decreased. However, although the number of granges had decreased, the average membership per grange had increased from 31½ to 40.<sup>2</sup> By 1880 those who had joined the Grange for any other purpose than the objects stated in its constitution had, for the most part, withdrawn, and the decline in membership seems to have stopped. At the same time the political agitation within the Grange came to an end and its efforts were devoted more and more to the fulfillment of its original aims. From this time a revival of interest may be noted, more especially in the New England States. At the meeting in Topeka in 1888, thirty-six states reported, and thirty were represented. By 1889 the total membership had increased to 150,000 and the annual reports for the last few years show indications of a healthy growth.

## 2. *The Illinois Grange: Its Organization and Growth.*

The movement in Illinois was similar to that in other states. As already stated, Mr. Kelley, the founder of the national order, organized the first grange in the state in the latter part of April, 1868, in the office of the *Prairie Farmer*. The number of granges organized each year for the eight succeeding years is as follows:<sup>3</sup>

In 1869....	2	In 1873....	761
In 1870....	1	In 1874....	704
In 1871....	5	In 1875....	50
In 1872....	69	In 1876....	27

Up to October 13, 1898, altogether one thousand seven hundred and twenty-two subordinate granges had been organized,

<sup>1</sup> Secretary, \$2,500 to \$2,000, Master, \$2,000 to \$1,200. Later: Master, \$1,200 to \$1,000; Treasurer, \$600 to \$500; Secretary, \$2,000 to \$1,500. In 1879, that of the Master was reduced to nothing, that of the Secretary to \$600.—*Pop. Sci. Mo.* 32:372, 373 and *Prairie Farmer* Jan. 12, 1878.

<sup>2</sup> *Prairie Farmer*.

<sup>3</sup> These figures were furnished by the Secretary of the State Grange, Thos. Keady, Dunlap, Ill.

in one hundred and one counties of the state, with Pomona, or county, granges in most of the counties. These sub-granges meet weekly, and the Pomona granges quarterly or monthly.

The State Grange was organized Mar. 5, 1872, and meets yearly. It is made up of delegates from the sub-granges and the Pomona granges. The first Grand Master was Alonzo Golder of Whiteside county. His successors in office were A. P. Forsyth, of Edgar county, E. A. Giller of Green county, J. M. Thompson of Will county, and Oliver Wilson of Putnam county, who now occupies the position.

From the figures given it is evident that the palmy days of grange activity in Illinois were in the years 1873 and '74, during which five-sixths of the total number of granges in the state were organized. From various causes the next few years saw a rapid decline in numerical strength. The large corn crops of 1871-73 filled every crib and available store-house to overflowing. Prices fell and freight rates rose, until five or six bushels of grain were required to get one bushel to New York City. The average local price of corn in Illinois in December, 1872, was only twenty-four cents a bushel,<sup>1</sup> and there is good reason to believe that it fell as low as fifteen cents a bushel in some localities. It became more profitable to use corn for fuel than to sell it.<sup>2</sup> A general money stringency ensued, culminating in the panic of 1873. The depression was continued by the unusually large crop of wheat in 1873-4,<sup>3</sup> which helped to overstock the market

<sup>1</sup> Monthly Reports of the Dept. of Agriculture for the year 1872, p. 470.

<sup>2</sup> Statement of Mr. Jos. B. Carter, Supt. Champaign, Ill., Schools. Also Pop. Sci. Mo., 32:203.

<sup>3</sup> The crops of corn and wheat for several years were :

Year.	CORN. Bushels.	Value.
1870.....	1,094,255,000.....	\$540,520,456
1871.....	991,898,000.....	430,355,210
1872.....	1,092,719,000.....	385,736,210
WHEAT.		
1870.....	233,884,700..	\$288,766,969
1871.....	230,722,400.....	264,075,851
1872.....	249,997,100.....	278,522,068
1873.....	281,264,700.....	300,669,533
1874.....	308,102,700.....	265,881,167

Year Book, Dept. of Agric. 1897,

with bread stuffs, bring down their prices, and increase the proportion of the product required to pay the cost of transportation. In the meantime the railroad law of 1871, against discriminations in freight rates, was declared unconstitutional.<sup>1</sup> The farmer was inclined to blame the railroad management for all his troubles, which were by no means light. The Credit Mobilier lent added cause for his fault finding. The grange organizers, whose salaries depended upon the number of granges formed, no doubt fomented the discontent and urged the formation of granges as a panacea for all ills. Thus, many who had no real comprehension of the principles of the Grange joined the organization in their vague search for a remedy for their discontent.

At first Iowa and Illinois took the lead in the Grange movement. Illinois never held first place either in the number of subordinate granges or in the number of individual members; but on June 25, 1873, she stood second, with 517 subordinate granges, Iowa being first.<sup>2</sup> Before Nov. 15 of the same year, Illinois had yielded second place to Kansas. The number of granges in Illinois had increased, however, to 712,<sup>3</sup> and there was much enthusiasm, especially in the northern part of the state. At the December meeting of the State Grange seven hundred and fifty Masters of subordinate granges were present, and it was estimated that there were eight hundred granges in the state. The work of organization was energetically pushed during the following year and the number of granges in the state nearly doubled. Still, at the close of the year, Illinois was surpassed by three states, Missouri, Iowa and Indiana.<sup>4</sup> The number of granges in the country had increased to 21,208, of which Illinois had 1,522.<sup>5</sup> Other organizations of farmers had sprung up in the meantime, but the Grange, not only because it was a secret order and un-

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<sup>1</sup> Report of R. R. & W. Commissioners for 1873 gives decision.

<sup>2</sup> *Prairie Farmer*, July 5, 1873.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Nov. 15, 1873.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Dec. 26, 1874.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*



like any of the others, but also on account of the energy of the officers, and its excellent discipline, held its own and gained a large share of the increase. The state Grange ante-dated the State Farmers' Association by a few months, but there were numerous local clubs in the state before the period of activity in the organization of sub-granges.<sup>1</sup> It was Mr. Kelley's plan to make of the Grange a great national organization under whose banner the farmers of the entire country should combine for mutual advantage. He believed and preached that the Grange was the best, in fact the only, organization adapted to securing the good of the farmer, and it was his wish that all farmers' clubs should reorganize as granges. His feeling was shared by many of his followers, and often resulted in aggressive action, which in many cases was resented. Thus a feeling of rivalry, and even hostility, grew up between the granges and the farmers' clubs.<sup>2</sup> At first the advantage seemed to lie with the grange. The secrecy of the order, combined with its excellent organization, made it a marked body, and the term Grange soon came to stand for the farmers' movement. All classes were eager to

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<sup>1</sup> Grange, Mar. 5, 1872; State Farmers' Association Oct. 16, 1872.

<sup>2</sup> S. M. Smith, the Secretary of the State Farmers' Association, in his report at the annual meeting of the association at Decatur, Dec. 16-18, 1873, calls attention to the jealousy existing between clubs and granges. He gives the number of clubs in the state as 820 and the number of granges as 549. He complains that many of the granges were delinquent in the payment of the per capita tax of ten cents a head, "acting probably under instructions from those in authority". He attributes this action to jealousy on the part of the Grange and implies that the feeling is mutual. He then attempts by a brief survey of the past to show that the Grange was not justified in its position, pointing out that at the first convention of the Farmers' Association, which was held at Kewanee, the grangers took a prominent part in the deliberations, and nearly one half of the offices of the Association were filled by them; and furthermore, that the Bloomington convention in January, 1873, was composed largely of grangers. The granges, he said, had been well treated by the Association and should by all means fulfill their obligations to it. For rivalry of such a nature is injurious to the cause of the farmer, and both organizations are needed, since they are very different in character, and many to whom one organization did not appeal would become enthusiastic members of the other.

join. "Lawyers, doctors, merchants, Shylocks and sharpers",<sup>1</sup> vied with one another in exhibiting their knowledge of agriculture and their interest in agricultural matters, in order to become grangers.

The Grange apparently held an enviable position, but in its very prominence lay causes for its downfall. On the one hand the jealousy between it and other farmers' organizations gradually grew into something like hostility, diverted its attention from its real purpose, and weakened its effectiveness as an organization. Moreover, the public, as a rule, blamed the Grange for acts of violence committed by the farmers and for foolish and dangerous legislation passed through their influence, but failed to credit the order with the good accomplished. Many of the weaker members were dismayed by criticism and surrendered their membership. Dissatisfaction with the policy of the National Grange, or with the forms in the subordinate granges, led others to withdraw. Some were convinced that the Grange had performed its mission and was no longer needed; others lost interest merely because the order had become less popular. No doubt the improvement in business also was favorable to apathy on the part of the Grange.

For these reasons a decline in membership began in 1875. Many new granges were organized during that and the following year, but still more were allowed to lapse; and by the close of 1877 there were only 646 granges in the state, with 12,639 members, an average of less than twenty each. Illinois at this time ranked 7th in number of granges and 14th in number of members.<sup>2</sup> The lowest point which the Grange has touched since the "days of 1873-4", was reached in 1885, when there were only 96 sub-granges in the state. Since that time the number has varied between one and two hundred, there being in October, 1898, one hundred and twenty-nine granges in forty-three

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<sup>1</sup> 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 from the woods.—D. W. Aiken in Special Report, etc., 2, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> Prairie Farmer, Dec. 8, 1877.

counties.<sup>1</sup> Numerically, the Grange became weaker, but, relieved of its load of useless freight, it has continued its existence, steadily though slowly growing stronger, and in the opinion of the Secretary is now "stronger in real effort than ever before." Meanwhile, the Grange, though failing to accomplish all that many of its enthusiastic admirers hoped, certainly has produced some results of much importance, especially in connection with the railroads.

### 3. *The Grange and the Railroads.*

While railroads were comparatively new in this section of the country, the advantages to be derived from them by the farmers were over-estimated. Extravagant hopes of speedy riches led many of small means, as well as some in comfortable circumstances, to move to the newly opened prairies of the West. Each new settlement looked forward to a rapid and continuous numerical growth and on the approach of a new road endeavored to bring it into the neighborhood. Large bounties were offered by booming towns and thriving rural communities in order to secure a road. The railroads naturally took advantage of the rivalry between different towns to make excessive demands. In many cases towns gave promises which were hard to fulfill, and issued bonds to an amount which they could ill afford. The bonus was given readily and at the time was thought to be a good investment. But the donors soon learned that the railroads were by no means charitable organizations,

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<sup>1</sup> The annual reports for the four years ending in December, 1903, show a total increase during that time of 26 granges and 2,140 members; 5 new granges and 300 new members are reported for the current year thus far, April 19, 1904. The report of the treasurer in December, 1903, showed the amount on hand to be \$2,921.64. The present officers are,—*Master*, Oliver Wilson, Magnolia, Putnam Co.; *Overseer*, W. J. Miller, St. Clair Co.; *Lecturer*, G. F. Bell, Lostant, LaSalle Co.; *Steward*, E. S. Helms, St. Clair Co.; *Asst. Steward*, E. R. Simmons, Jersey Co.; *Chaplain*, Mrs. Katherine Stahl, Madison Co.; *Treasurer*, D. Q. Trotter, Jersey Co.; *Secretary*, Miss Jeannette E. Yeates, Dunlap, Peoria Co.; *Gate Keeper*, Eric Lindstrom, Henry Co.; *Ceres*, Miss Florence A. Given, Putnam Co.; *Pomona*, Miss Lela M. Eyerly, Fulton Co.; *Flora*, Miss Mary M. Zoll, Fulton Co.; *Lady Steward*, Mrs. L. B. Seiler, Wabash Co. Facts furnished by ex-Secretary Thomas Keady, Dunlap, Ill.



and that the development of the country was an incident rather than a motive in their organization. Stock-watering was commonly practised, with its accompanying extortionate rates. Accurate figures, showing the extent to which this practice was carried, are hard to get, but there is no doubt that the amount of watered stock issued frequently equalled or exceeded the paid up capital.<sup>1</sup> The farmers soon came to the conclusion that they had been hoodwinked by the railway companies. A feeling of resentment was created, which might have been overcome and even destroyed by a little consideration on the part of the roads; but the latter foolishly disregarded opportunities for conciliation, and blindly pursued what they conceived to be their own interests. Each company arranged its rates with a view to securing as large a share of the traffic as possible. This led to discriminations of two sorts.<sup>2</sup> In the first place, those points fortunate enough to have two or more competing roads were favored with very low rates, so low, indeed, as to bring a loss to the roads. In consequence, they sought to recoup themselves by extortionate charges at intermediate points. In this way it frequently happened that it cost more to ship goods 100 than 150 miles, under similar circumstances, on the same road. Smaller towns having but one road were thus placed at a great disadvantage. It became necessary for such towns to seek the favor of the roads, since an arbitrary use of the power of discrimination might render a business profitable at one place and ruinous at another. Indeed, the very existence of towns was placed at the mercy of the railroads. Personal discriminations were also made. There were no regular tariffs, and every customer had to make his own bargain. If he had enough influence

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<sup>1</sup> No. Am. Rev., 120:415; Larrabee, *The Railroad Question*, 172:247; Cook, *The Corporation Problem*, 24ff.; *Second Annual Report of Interstate Commerce Commission*, 63; Hadley, *Railroad Transportation*, 101-2; Hudson, *The Railroads and the Republic*, 267-95; Cowles, 262-3; Stickney, *Railway Problem*, 196-201; *Poor's Manual*, 1884.

<sup>2</sup> Hudson, *The Railroads and the Republic*, 25-67; Jeans, *Railway Problems*, 519-524; Hadley, *Railroad Transportation*, 100-125; Alexander, *Railway Practice*, 5-23; Dabney, *Public Regulation of Railways*, 67-174; Dixon, *State R. R. Control*, 48-77.



to secure favorable terms he possessed a decided advantage over others with less weight, or who had incurred the displeasure of the roads. These discriminations bore heavily upon a large number of people, so that instead of securing advantages by the proximity of a road they were frequently placed at a disadvantage. Then, too, the railroad charges varied from year to year.<sup>1</sup> As long as the supply of agricultural produce was limited, prices remained high and railroad charges fell. But favorable seasons and additional producers soon increased production. Prices fell and at the same time the roads raised their freight rates, expecting to have all the freight they could haul even at the advanced rate, since the farmers, having more grain than could be consumed on the farm, rather than hold their crops for higher prices, would continue to market them so long as the returns were sufficient to pay the cost of transportation. Thus in seeking to regulate their rates so as to charge "what the traffic would bear", they made the mistake of charging what it would not bear. The results were unfortunate to the companies and distressing to the farmers. The latter thought that they were being robbed by the railroads and watched eagerly for an opportunity to retaliate. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that when the bonds issued by counties, towns, etc., in payment of railroad bounties, fell due, there should be serious opposition to their payment and in many cases absolute repudiation.

Had the men who owned the railroads been western men, men who were in sympathy with the western country, men who recognized the community of interest between themselves and the western farmer, their actions would certainly have been very different. But they were for the most part, residents of the eastern states and England,<sup>2</sup> and were ignorant of the agricultural situation in the West. They cared little for the West or for the western farmer, and failed to recognize the principle that in order to run railroads successfully public opinion must

<sup>1</sup> Bulletin No. 15 U. S. Dept. of Agriculture.

<sup>2</sup> C. F. Adams, Jr., in No. Am. Rev., 120:398, 399, 400-402.

not be antagonized. While the railroads took this view of the matter it was not strange that the farmers of the West found cause for complaint about the management.

Aside from all this there was still another cause for complaint, in the insulting treatment which patrons of the roads at times received at the hands of railroad officials and employees. This discourteous attitude assumed by the officials and employees is well set forth by E. W. Martin in his "History of the Granger Movement".<sup>1</sup> The same abuse is also illustrated in an article by C. F. Adams, Jr., appearing in the *North American Review*,<sup>2</sup> an extract from which is given herewith :

"In New England the condition of affairs is bad enough ; and more than one important corporation has experienced great injury, or finds itself leading an existence of perpetual warfare and turmoil, solely through the inability of some prominent and, perhaps, otherwise valuable official to demean himself with consideration towards his brother man. What, in this respect, is seen here in the East is absolutely nothing to what prevails in the West. Taken as a class, the manners of the employees of the western railroad systems are probably the worst and most offensive to be found in the civilized world. It is difficult to see why the official should regard the traveler or the person having dealings with the railroad as his natural enemy ; but it is apparent that he does. If it were an ordinary manifestation of the American fondness for asserting equality on all occasions it would be endurable ; it commonly, however, partakes of a more aggressive and hostile character. A ticket is sold, and the purchaser at the same time is made to feel that a favor has been conferred upon him,—that he is on no account to ask any questions,—and, indeed, had best speedily remove himself out of the way. The gruffness of the baggage-master is, as a rule, only exceeded by his violence to the baggage. Indeed, it would sometimes seem that it must be a prominent rule laid down by the companies for the guidance of their servants, that they are to show the least possible degree of respect or consideration to any person having business with the company ; and so thoroughly is this principle applied, that—always excepting Mr. Pullman's cars, in which an excellent discipline is maintained—the rail-

<sup>1</sup> Pages 98-132.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. 120:394-424.

roads of the west are the single institution anywhere to be found from whose servants money will not at all times buy civility even of the commonest kind. I very well remember an amusing illustration of this rule which happened to me about two years ago. One autumn day I found myself at the station at Omaha about to take the eastward train. In the baggage-room of the station, I had, some hours before, left quite a heavy trunk for which I now presented my check. The sternly silent baggage-master found it, seized it, and, without a word tumbled it out of the door at my feet and disappeared into the recesses of his lair. The train I was to take was some distance down the same platform on which I was standing, perhaps a hundred yards. I could not well carry the trunk to it, and it seemed foolish to abandon it, especially as directly in front of me an assistant baggage-master or porter of the company stood leaning against the side of the station, chewing a straw and lazily observing me. There seemed but one short way out of the difficulty; taking out my purse and addressing him in the most persuasive tones, I said 'Do you think you could get a truck and wheel that trunk down to the train there for me?'—at the same time suggestively fingering the purse. For an instant the gentleman addressed did not move a muscle; then, after contemplating me to his satisfaction, his mouth opened, he stopped chewing the straw, and simply uttered the one expressive monosyllable, 'No';—this done, he resumed the mastication of his straw, and the conversation ceased. In that case it is fair to presume that the public had worried and annoyed the poor fellow by asking him all sorts of questions, and calling on him, even as I had, for all sorts of services; but the ingenuity of discourtesy with which he retaliated was certainly deserving of all praise, nor can I doubt that before this, his merit has been recognized, and he has been promoted to the office of freight agent, or, perchance, assistant superintendent."

However, the railroads were not altogether responsible for the hostility felt against them by the farmers. That they could please their patrons in no particular only shows that the expectations of the latter were unreasonable. It is true, no doubt, that the railroad agents, in order to induce the payment of a larger bounty, painted in rosy colors the probable benefits which the people would derive from the building of roads.<sup>1</sup> The peo-

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<sup>1</sup> E. W. Martin, *History of the Grange Movement*, pp. 52-53.



ple, having magnified these suggestions into positive promises, were irritated by their failure to materialize in fact. They hoped for too much and complained when their hopes were not realized.

As the threats of the farmers increased, the railroad officers grew obstinate, until finally, the farmers had recourse to legislation. Little was done in this direction, however, before 1870. The Illinois constitution of that year took somewhat advanced ground in the matter of railroad legislation. Some of the provisions referring to railroads are as follows :

Article XI sec. 1. "No corporation shall be created by special laws or its charter extended, changed or amended, except those for charitable, penal, or reformatory purposes which are to be and remain under the patronage and control of the State, but the General Assembly shall provide, by general laws, for the organization of all corporations hereafter to be created."

Section 9 of the same article requires the directors of every railway corporation to make an annual report to the state, under oath. Other sections define rolling stock as personal property, limit the power of consolidation, require the General Assembly to "pass laws establishing reasonable maximum rates of charges for the transportation of passengers on the different railroads in the State", and provide against fictitious increase of capital stock. Section 15 reads as follows :

"The General Assembly shall pass laws to correct abuses and prevent unjust discriminations and extortion in the rates of freight and passenger tariffs on the different roads in this State, and enforce such laws, by adequate penalties, to the extent, if necessary for that purpose, of forfeiture of their property and franchise."

These constitutional provisions opened the way for positive enactment. As yet there had been no organized effort to secure specific results, but such organization was not long in coming.

In the literature of the time we find many references to the "Farmers' Ring" in the Illinois legislature of 1871.<sup>1</sup> Strictly speaking, this was not a ring of grangers, for it ante-dated the

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<sup>1</sup> E. g. *Prairie Farmer*, Feb. 18, 1871.

period of granger organization. But, after all, it was part and parcel of the same movement, hastening the organization of granges and having much influence upon them, so that a brief notice of it will help us to a better understanding of the Grange.

On February 7th, 1871, sixty-five members of the legislature met in the rooms of the State Agricultural Society "for the purpose of organizing a farmers' and mechanics' club to look after the interests of the producing class, to subject all bills and measures to a thorough and free discussion, and by unanimity of action to secure such legislation as will relieve the necessities of the mechanical and agricultural interests of the state." This organization was usually spoken of by its enemies as "The Farmers' Club" or "The Farmers Ring", either as a term of description or reproach.

It was this legislature that passed the famous restrictive law<sup>1</sup> of 1871. Among these laws was one approved by the governor, April 15, 1871, entitled "An act to establish a reasonable maximum rate of charges for the transportation of passengers on the railroads of this state".<sup>2</sup> According to this law the railroads of the state were divided into four classes, according to their gross earnings per mile. Maximum passenger rates were established, which varied from two and half cents a mile, in the case of those earning \$10,000, or more per mile, to five and a half cents a mile for those earning under \$4,000.

But the best known of these restrictive laws was intended to prevent discriminations in freight rates, and was approved by the governor, April 7, 1871.<sup>3</sup> Its provisions were complex but may be summarized under three heads: First, roads shall not charge as much, or more, for carrying goods a less distance than for a greater distance. Second, the roads shall not charge different rates for handling and receiving at the same or different points. Third, they shall not charge more for transporta-

<sup>1</sup> *Prairie Farmer*, Feb. 18, 1871.

<sup>2</sup> *Public Laws of thirty-seventh General Assembly*, p. 640.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 625.

tion a given distance on one portion than for the same distance on another portion of the road.

It was comparatively easy to secure the passage of this act. Its enforcement was another matter. At first the railroads paid little or no attention to it. There was no method of enforcement except through the courts on complaint of an individual who could show that he had been injured by the non-compliance of the roads. At length, in order to test the validity of the law, a suit known as the McLean Co. test case was instituted.<sup>1</sup> The suit was brought by the Railway and Warehouse Commissioners in the name of the people of the State of Illinois against the Chicago & Alton Railroad Co. for violation of the law of 1871, regarding discriminations in freight rates. The complaint declared that the company was charging \$5.65 per thousand on lumber from Chicago to Lexington, a distance of one hundred and ten miles, while the rate from Chicago to Bloomington, a distance of one hundred and twenty-six miles, was only \$5.00 per thousand. The defendant admitted these facts and also that its action was contrary to the law of 1871. It held, however, that the Bloomington rate was excessively low owing to competition with the Illinois Central; that no one was injured by the discrimination except the company itself; and that such discrimination was not illegal, because the Act of 1871 was contrary to both state and national constitutions.

The case was heard in the McLean Co. circuit court by Judge Tipton, who gave a verdict against the company. The grounds of the decision were that the state, in order to give all citizens equal protection, must insure them against such discriminations, and that anything in the charter of the railroad company construed contrary to the principle of equality must in the very nature of things be void, for railroad companies have no rights contrary to the welfare of the people.<sup>2</sup> The case was appealed to the Supreme Court, Chief Justice Lawrence presiding, and the decision of the lower court was reversed. In the words of

<sup>1</sup> 67 Ill., pp. 11-27.

<sup>2</sup> Second Annual Report of the R. R. & W. Commissioners, pp. 99-114.



the court, "Before this act can be enforced it should be so amended as to correspond with the requirement of the constitution by directing its provisions against *unjust* discriminations. It should make the charging of a greater compensation for a less distance, merely *prima facie* evidence of unjust discrimination, instead of *conclusive* evidence as it now is, and it should give the railway companies the right of trial by jury, not only on the fact of discrimination, but upon the issue whether such discrimination is just or not." In other words, the law of 1871, although entitled an "Act to prevent *unjust* discriminations," was so worded as to include all discriminations and was therefore contrary to the constitution.<sup>1</sup>

The decision of the higher court came as a surprise to the farmers, most of whom had thought that the law of 1871 had settled once for all the question of railroad control. Their disappointment was intense and showed itself sometimes in a ludicrous manner. There had already been much agitation throughout the state for a three cent mileage rate for passenger travel.<sup>2</sup> The farmers were convinced that this was a sufficient charge and that the railroad companies in charging more were giving just cause for complaint. The adverse decision of the court in the one instance led many to believe that legal opposition to the roads was ineffective in any case, so that they began to take matters into their own hands. The more hot-headed among them were prepared to use any means by which their grievances might be redressed. They agreed to offer their fare when travelling at the rate of three cents a mile and to refuse more. Especially when travelling in groups to and from conventions they made themselves troublesome to the railroad officials in this matter. Sometimes they accomplished their object and sometimes they failed. Trains were often side-tracked leaving the farmers unable to proceed. Sometimes the farmers resorted to violence. A story is told<sup>3</sup> of a party of farmers on their way

<sup>1</sup> 67 Ill. pp. 11-27. Quotation p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> E. W. Martin, History of the Grange Movement; Jonathan Periam, The Ground Swell; Prairie Farmer 1871, 1872.

<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Periam, The Ground Swell.

to a convention who, when the train officials refused to accept fares at the three cent rate, and ordered a force of employees to put them off, drew revolvers and bowie-knives and drove the railroad men from the train. It is not stated whether the convention to which these men were going was a meeting of grangers or of some other farmers' organization. It makes little difference, however, for the whole farmers' movement was a unit in the popular conception and can scarcely be analyzed into distinct parts even by careful study. So, whatever the facts may have been, the Grange received the blame for such acts of violence and the reputation of the order was injured.

Meanwhile, opposition to the roads was continued in the legislature. A law, passed May 2, 1873,<sup>1</sup> empowered the Railway and Warehouse Commissioners to make a schedule of reasonable maximum rates for the transportation of passengers, freight and cars.<sup>2</sup> This law was finally sustained in the courts though bitterly opposed by the railroads, and, as amended by the act of June 30, 1885, may be found to-day on the statute books.<sup>3</sup> The law also provided that any railroad which should charge, demand or receive more than a fair and reasonable rate of toll or compensation should be deemed guilty of extortion and punished, and that "if any such railroad corporation shall make any unjust discrimination in its rates of charge of toll or compensation for the transportation of passengers or freight of any description" etc. . . . . it "shall be deemed guilty of having violated the provisions of this act and shall be dealt with", etc.<sup>4</sup> It was further provided that all such discriminating rates, charges, collections, or receipts, whether made directly or by means of any rebate, draw-back, or other shift or eva-

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<sup>1</sup> Statutes of Ill., 1873, p. 135. Revised Statutes of Ill., 1874, p. 816. sec. 8 6-95. Report of R. R. & W. Commission, 1873, pp. 162-167.

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 8 of the law.

<sup>3</sup> Starr & Curtis's Annotated Ill. Statutes, Second Edition (1896) v. 3 pp. 3309-3316; Revised Statutes of Ill. (1895) pp. 1210-1213, sections 124:133.

<sup>4</sup> Section 2.



sion shall be deemed and taken against such railroad corporation as prima facie evidence of unjust discrimination".<sup>1</sup>

The law was the outgrowth of claims made by the farmers of extortionate rates in both passenger and freight traffic. Regarding passenger rates they claimed that the three cent rate had formerly prevailed, but that in order to increase the dividends upon watered stock, the rate had been gradually raised since 1853 until, in 1871, it averaged four and a fifth cents a mile throughout the state.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the railroads claimed that in the state as a whole the rates were lower than at any previous time. They also claimed that further reductions would involve a loss. The facts as gathered from a late publication<sup>3</sup> of the Department of Agriculture, show that in almost every case railroad rates, both freight and passenger, had gradually fallen from 1850-1870. A very slight increase is noticeable in some of the roads from 1870 to 1873, and a decided decrease in the years immediately following. From this statement it may be seen that both sides were partly wrong—the farmer, in claiming that there had been a continuous rise; and the railroad companies, in asserting that the rates were lower than ever before. One circumstance in this connection should be particularly noted, since it apparently substantiates the claims of those who are antagonizing the railroads. Throughout the era of railroad construction the rates on newly built lines, almost without exception, were higher than on those which had been built for some time. During the lull in railroad building between 1860 and 1865 the rates on existing roads, then few in number in Illinois, continued to fall. The construction of new roads was carried on rapidly in the next few years, and when they began operations their rates were considerably higher than those of the older roads. This, of course, temporarily raised the average rate for the state. The rise occurred notwithstanding the steady decrease on the older roads and an

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<sup>1</sup> Section 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Prairie Farmer*, Jan. 25, 1873.

<sup>3</sup> Bulletin No. 15, *Miscellaneous Series*, Division of Statistics, Secs. 1 and 6.

almost immediate reduction on the new. In other words, when we remember that new roads were rapidly going into operation, it seems quite probable that the new roads, charging rates temporarily higher, more than counterbalanced the decrease in rates on the older roads, so that the average for the state probably was increasing, as claimed by the farmer. Although the building of new roads was in reality a benefit to the farmer, yet the high rates charged on these roads, in comparison with the rates on the old lines, created the impression that the railroads were taking advantage of the situation to secure abnormal profits and thus gave plausibility to the arguments for fixing rates by law.

At all events, however sound or unsound were the arguments advanced, the farmers were able to marshal sufficient strength to pass the law. In this case, as in the former one, the real test came with the effort to enforce the law. The roads at first ignored the law entirely. They did so publicly and even boastingly.<sup>1</sup> The matter was soon brought into the courts, where they were compelled to plead their cause. They maintained the illegality of the law on the ground that the railroads were private corporations, operating under a charter received from the state, that it was not within the power of the state to pass laws annulling or restricting the charter,<sup>2</sup> which, being in the nature of a contract between the state and the railroad, was not subject to alteration by either party without the consent of the other. Consequently, since their charters made no mention of state regulation, the railroads were not bound to submit to interference, and therefore any discriminations which they might make were both legal and justifiable. They held that they had the right to make the best bargain they could with each customer and might, if they saw fit, refuse a man's trade altogether.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Stickney, *Railway Problems*, Letter of Alexander Mitchell to Governor W. R. Taylor, of Ia., pp. 102-109. Report of Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce, serial number 2356, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. "Dartmouth College Case", *Dartmouth College v. Woodward*, 17 U. S. pp. 518-715.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. arguments in "granger cases." Also Stickney, *Railway Problems*, chs. X., XI.

The farmers, on the other hand, contended that the railroads as "common carriers" had no right to refuse to haul a man's goods at the price paid by others. They called attention to the immense power over business which could be exercised by the railroads, if allowed to discriminate in this way. They also denied the contention of the railroads as to the power of the state to make changes in the charter of a corporation, claiming that the state had virtually created the corporation, which, as the creation of the state must be subject to its control.<sup>1</sup> The fight in the courts was carried on with a great deal of bitterness and lasted for several years. The decision of the Supreme Court rendered in 1876 upheld the arguments of the grangers and asserted the right of the states to regulate rates within their own boundaries and to compel the railroads to post a schedule of their rates for the benefit of the public. Extracts from the various decisions follow:

(A) *Munn v. Ill.* 94 U. S. 134, extracts from syllabus,—

(1) "Under the powers inherent in every sovereignty, a government may regulate the conduct of its citizens toward each other, and when necessary for the public good, the manner in which each shall use his own property."

(6) "The limitation by legislative enactment of the rate of charge for services rendered in a public employment, or for the use of property in which the public has an interest, establishes no new principle in the law, but only gives a new effect to an old one."

(7) "When warehouses are situated and their business is carried on exclusively within a state, she may, as a matter of domestic concern, prescribe regulations for them notwithstanding they are used as instruments by those engaged in an inter-state, as well as a state, commerce; and, until Congress acts in reference to these inter-state relations, such regulations can be enforced even though they may operate indirectly upon commerce beyond her immediate jurisdiction." Decision rendered in October, 1876.

(B) *Chicago, Burlington & Quincy R. R. Co. v. Iowa.*—Extracts from syllabus:

(1) "Railroad companies are carriers for hire. Engaged in a

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Stickney, *Railway Problem*, chapters X. and XI.

public employment affecting the public interest, they are, unless protected by their charters, subject to legislative control as to their rates of fare and freight.”

(4) “The act of the General Assembly of the State of Iowa, entitled ‘An act to establish reasonable maximum rates of charges for transportation of freight and passengers on the different roads of this state’, approved March 23, 1874 is not in conflict with section 4, Article 1, of the constitution of Iowa, which provides that all laws of a general nature shall have a uniform operation and, etc . . . . . ‘nor is it a regulation of inter-state commerce.’ Decision rendered, October, 1876.

(C) Peck v. Chicago & Northwestern R. R. Co.

“Held, that the legislature had power to prescribe a maximum of charges to be made by said company for transporting persons or property within the state, or taken up outside the state and brought within it, or taken up inside and carried without.” Decision rendered Oct. 1876.

(D) Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad Co. v. Ackley. The decision in this case, also given in October, 1876, determined that a railroad company can not recover for any amount above the maximum rate established by law.

(E) Winona & St. Peter R. R. Co. v. Blake. Syllabus:

“The Winona & St. Peter Railroad company, having been incorporated as a common carrier was bound to carry when called upon for that purpose and to charge only a reasonable compensation therefor.”

(F) Shields v. Ohio, 95 U. S. 319, syllabus:

“The General Assembly does not, therefore, impair the obligation of a contract by prescribing the rates for the transportation of the passengers by the new company, although one of the original companies was prior to the adoption of that constitution, organized under a charter which imposed no limitations as to such rates.”

It is interesting to note that similar legislation was in progress in neighboring states, notably in Wisconsin, where the famous Potter Law created intense feeling on the part of the railroads. Iowa also had similar troubles. Illinois was probably as successful as any of her sister states in dealing with this problem and her legislation in general was less radical.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Report of Senate Committee, Congressional Reports, serial number 2356 pp. 71-74.



The railroad laws of the '70's are sometimes sneeringly called "Granger legislation". It is worth while to attempt to discover what relation actually existed between them and the Grange. Popular opinion on this subject is at variance with the statements of grange officials.<sup>1</sup> The first so-called "Granger laws" of Illinois were passed not later than April 15, 1871. At the close of this year there had been but nine subordinate granges organized in this state, and the state organization itself was not formed until the fifth of March, 1872. In the light of these facts it is difficult to see how the railway legislation of 1871 can be laid at the door of the grangers. This much, however, is certain: an effort was being made at this time to bring the railroads under legislative control and the movement was encountering opposition. The decision of the court, declaring the law of 1871 unconstitutional, came as a shock to the farmers. It revealed their weakness and showed them that they could not make headway unless they could combine their forces. By this time the Grange had attained some prominence and, because of its complete organization, its discipline, and the limitation of its membership to farmers, had become the center around which the farmers rallied against the railroads. Whatever may have been the previous policy of the Grange it could no longer remain neutral. The question was of vital interest to the farmers and its discussion could not be kept out of grange meetings. The Grange therefore took the lead in the "war upon the railroads", and all opposed to the roads were glad to call themselves grangers. As one man prominent in political matters of the time says, "We were all grangers. I never belonged to the order but I was a granger just the same".

We must therefore admit, that from this time on, the Grange, at least equally with other farmers' organizations, was responsible for the opposition to the railroads. Otherwise we must find some cause for its tremendous growth and activity at this

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Chas. W. Pierson says, "In spite of the assertions of Mr. C. F. Adams and others it can be shown that the Grange was not responsible for the Illinois legislation. Pop. Sci. Mo. 32:206. Cf. Hadley, Railroad Transportation 130-136.

time, distinct from those which led to corresponding growth in other farmers' organizations. The evidence seems convincing that the whole struggle against the railroads and other corporations, in the years from 1872-'77, may properly be included under the head of the granger movement. This was certainly the opinion of the majority of the grangers themselves.

The railroad laws of the western states in the early seventies were crude, as laws are likely to be when dealing with new subjects. In some cases they were declared unconstitutional, as was the first law in Illinois. They caused much harsh criticism<sup>1</sup> in the east. Many articles were written denouncing the laws as virtual confiscation, and asserting that they were contrary to the best interests of the states which passed them. It was proved to the satisfaction of the writers that such states as Illinois and Wisconsin had seriously impaired their credit, that they were retarding their own development and that the demands of the farmers were most unreasonable. It was declared that as a result of these laws railroad building in the West had received a check from which it would not recover. There was a grain of truth in these statements. Some of the legislation was ill-considered, and in so far as it was unconstitutional the granger movement was somewhat discredited. The credit of the states was impaired somewhat<sup>2</sup> but less on account of the laws themselves than because of overdrawn comments upon them. Railroad building was checked temporarily in some sections, but this was not altogether undesirable. Moreover the length of time during which some of these so-called "Granger laws" have remained in force carries with it a decided vindication of the policy.

The Railway and Warehouse Commission has already been mentioned in connection with the Grange in this state, but deserves separate treatment on account of its importance. It was created by the act of May 13, 1871, with power to inquire into

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<sup>1</sup> Pop. Sci. Mo., 32:206, Nation, 16:381; 17:140; 17:266; 19:36; 19:122; etc.

<sup>2</sup> Nation, 20:33; C. F. Adams Jr. in No. Am. Rev. 120:394,

the management of roads, to subpoena witnesses for that purpose, to prosecute parties for the violation of laws, but with little or no discretionary powers in the regulation of the roads.<sup>1</sup> The reports of the commissioners for 1871 and 1872 indicate that they met with many difficulties and were able to exert but little influence upon the roads. The act of May 2, 1873<sup>2</sup> extended and enlarged their powers. Section 7 of that act increased their powers in the prosecution of violations of the law, and section 8 empowered them to fix a schedule of reasonable maximum rates for the transportation of passengers, freight and cars. These rates were to be accepted in the courts as *prima facie* evidence in all cases of alleged unjust discrimination. That the farmers then considered this commission able to enforce their demands is evident from the opposition aroused by Governor Beveridge in 1873, when he proposed as members of the commission, men who were not considered representative of the interests of the farmers. Public sentiment was so strong against these men that the appointments were finally withdrawn without action by the Senate. The governor then appointed three men more satisfactory to the farmers.

In conclusion, it may be said of the attitude of the railroads that while there is little question that many of the demands of the Illinois grangers were decidedly unreasonable, and some of their methods forcible and illegal, yet this unreasonableness was made an excuse for opposition to many demands which were reasonable. In the main, the granger principles were sound and the results of the movement beneficial; for it has convinced the railroad corporations that railroads, to be successful, must be operated in accordance with the demands of their patrons, and that it is only a question of time when flagrant abuses affecting a large number of people must be remedied.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Laws of Illinois, 1871-1872 pp. 619-625.

<sup>2</sup> Report of R. R. & W. Commission 1873, pp. 62-65.

4. *Political Features.*

The original design of the National Grange did not involve legislative activity. But, as we have already seen, some of the abuses which called the organization into existence could be reformed only through legislation. The precedent established in the case of the railroads was soon extended,<sup>1</sup> and before long we find criticisms of the Grange for depending on legislation as a remedy for all evils. As a matter of fact, its influence secured the passage of comparatively few enactments. But granger conventions discussed many plans of reform and, directly or indirectly, aided in the passage of many measures in the legislature. If we might give the Grange credit for legislation in accordance with its policy, passed since the days of its power, the story might prove much longer. However, for the present, at any rate, we must confine ourselves to measures passed or reforms agitated as a direct result of granger influence.

One of the first moves of the grangers in this direction was for the reduction of the salaries of public officers. This matter was discussed with warmth in meetings of both state and national granges, not only in Illinois, but also in Iowa, Wisconsin, Indiana, and other states. The discussion occurred for the most part immediately after the panic of 1873. The term "salary grab" was frequently used and there seemed to be practical unanimity of opinion among grangers that the salaries of officials were too high and that the offices, having become objects of political greed, were not filled by representative men, a phrase which to them meant farmers. The grangers further declared that since all commodities had decreased in value, it was manifestly unfair that officers of the government should not also sustain a reduction, and that an increase in their salaries would be robbery of the people. The stand of the grangers seems to have

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<sup>1</sup> The *Prairie Farmer* of Feb. 8, 1873 urged activity in legislative matters, in the following words: "The legislature is now in session. Now is the time for the grangers of the state to discuss needed legislation and to put themselves in communication with one or more members of the legislature" so as to know what is being done and to exercise an influence on legislation.



had some effect at least in neutralizing the movement for higher salaries, especially in the case of judges of the Supreme Court of the state.

Other measures were proposed by the farmers, such as laws prohibiting stock from running at large : a tax on dogs to indemnify sheep owners for losses due to dogs : the planting and preservation of forest trees : the abolition of gambling and horse-racing at fairs : and guarding against the importation of contagious diseases among stock. The discussion of other questions such as Prohibition and Woman Suffrage brought about numerous resolutions, but these matters received but little serious attention.

The question was frequently raised among grangers, whether or not a member of the Grange should seek office. The general opinion seemed to be that he should seek representation for the farmer and if offered a nomination should not refuse it.<sup>1</sup> However, there were numerous instances where grange officers refused a party nomination because of their position in the Grange. On the other hand, many must have been quite willing to accept. Otherwise we would not have had a grange legislature in Wisconsin in 1875, nor 36 grangers in the California legislature

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<sup>1</sup> The *Prairie Farmer* of January 23, 1875, contains a noteworthy argument on this subject. A portion of it is as follows :

"And yet farmers ought to fill important offices. Probably we shall have no reform in politics until a majority of farmers shall be sent to the legislature and to congress. But as those now on the stage of action are unfit, however ravenous they may be, those who shall be fit must be prepared, and the only material lies in the young men now entering life. The question arises, how shall they be prepared.

Take any young man well brought up, and containing within himself good hereditary qualities, who is married and somewhat in debt for land, teams and implements, and who is ambitious ; it will be a good plan for him to think of going to the legislature, and being now, from 22 to 26, he may reasonably expect to attain this object by the time he is forty or fifty, not before ; on the condition that he takes the proper course and pursues it steadily. Many things must occur, and there are more things in life than most young men imagine."

The article continuing, gives more specific directions in effect as follows : Be honest, be temperate and keep good health. Cultivate love for your wife. Read, learn to observe, practice handwriting. The farm should not exceed forty acres. Work no more than eight hours a day. Spend from three to six hours a day in reading or study. Travel as much as possible, etc.

of 1878. From this we may conclude that although some of the leaders were very careful to keep out of politics, either because the Grange was theoretically outside of the sphere of political activity or because the positions which they already held were more influential than the political offices within their reach, yet many members of the order certainly had no such scruples and probably counted on the help of their fellow grangers to raise them into office. Many grangers or grange representatives occupied seats in the various state legislatures because of granger support. Politicians who were not members of the order and who were unable to join, solicited the friendship of the Grange by supporting their principles in words and often in deeds. The Grange also came into politics sometimes through the efforts of politicians to manipulate granger conventions. The case of Judge Lawrence is in point. Acting in the capacity of Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court, he pronounced the decision of the court in the McLean county test case, declaring the railroad law of 1871 unconstitutional. His term soon expired and, as he was supported by nearly the whole bar of the state, he was renominated by his party almost without opposition. The executive committee of the State Grange had previously publicly and explicitly acknowledged the justice of the decision,<sup>1</sup> but politicians were shrewd enough to see that the farmers were not entirely satisfied and that a little judicious scheming might stir up a blaze of opposition. Under their leadership, or influence, grangers' and farmers' conventions met

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<sup>1</sup> The Prairie Farmer, Mar. 22, 1873, prints resolutions adopted by the executive committee of the Illinois State Grange after the decision in the McLean Co. case :

"Resolved, that the question of railway tariffs now agitating this and other states involves issues of the gravest character and should be settled on principles of soundest law and strictest justice to all parties concerned.

Resolved, that the recent decision of the Supreme Court of the State in the railway case from McLean Co., so-called, seems dictated by patriotism and wisdom, and so far as we understand its reasonings and suggestions, they are accepted with satisfaction and approval.

Resolved, that the present General Assembly are respectfully requested and urged to enact a law under which reasonable tariffs, both freight and passenger, shall be established, and by which unjust discriminations in the same shall be prevented."

and endorsed the nomination of the rival candidate, who was less widely known, and who, though under no pledge, was generally understood to be a friend of the farmers nominated for a definite purpose.<sup>1</sup> Lawrence was defeated at the polls by the vote of the organized farmers. This and other cases were plainly attempts to control the decision of the courts, and were quickly interpreted by outsiders as methods of lawlessness and anarchy. The granger movement was discredited, and the grange weakened, since it was unable to justify itself in the eyes of those who condemned its action. Here again the Grange suffered on account of its fame. Because of its prominence it bore the brunt of the criticism though receiving only a share of the praise from those in sympathy with its methods. As we look at the matter now in the light of more dispassionate criticism, we are bound to admit the right of the farmer to refuse to vote for Judge Lawrence. But when we reflect that his defeat was due to a judicial decision whose soundness was admitted by the grangers themselves we can scarcely avoid misgivings either as to the patriotism or good sense of the people responsible for his defeat. But we must not judge the farmers' organizations too harshly, for the members had been keenly disappointed at the failure of the law to which they had looked for relief from the impositions of the railroad companies.

In the early days of the Grange, 1872 and 1873, partisan newspapers made strenuous efforts to induce it to make an expression of opinion on the tariff question. In this they were only partly successful. Nearly every time resolutions were introduced bearing upon the subject, means were found for disposing of them without provoking discussion. Not so in a convention held in Bloomington, and controlled by politicians. A resolution was introduced calling for the immediate repeal of the protective duties on iron, steel and all other materials which

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<sup>1</sup> *Prairie Farmer*, May 31, 1878, gives an account of a convention held at Yates City at the call of the Yates City Grange for the purpose of ratifying the nomination of Hon. A. M. Craig for Chief Justice of the state Supreme Court. Resolutions were passed pledging the members of the convention "individually and collectively to use all honorable means to secure the election of the Hon. A. M. Craig," etc.



enter into the construction of railroad cars, steamships, etc. A heated discussion arose, at the close of which the resolution was passed by a narrow margin. That night most of the delegates went home and an effort was made the next day to reconsider the question. The attempt, however, failed. It was readily seen by the grangers that such matters must be let severely alone, for much feeling was caused by this action. Consequently we hear of no more tariff discussions in grange conventions.

In the matter of currency reform there were fewer differences of opinion than on the tariff. For although there were, no doubt, as many different schemes of revision as there were minds capable of evolving a scheme, the details of these plans were little discussed and the grangers usually contented themselves with a general demand for currency revision.<sup>1</sup> A clipping from an Iowa paper may be taken as fairly representing granger declarations on this subject. It is as follows: "The grange is the germ seed of the great national movement now in vigorous progress to secure a national system of currency that shall be just to all classes of citizens, without favoring by special law those who choose to invest in banks of issue".<sup>2</sup>

Many other public matters came up for discussion, and there were few important questions of the time upon which the Grange failed to make some expression. For example the popular election of United States Senators was often discussed in grange conventions and some efforts were made to secure a more equitable adjustment of taxes. It is none the less true, as shown by the resolutions of the Potomac Grange passed in 1878,<sup>3</sup> that there was a feeling somewhat widespread, that aside from the principle involved it was a bad policy for the Grange to express itself on political matters,<sup>4</sup> inasmuch as professional politicians

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<sup>1</sup> The *Prairie Farmer* of Feb. 21, 1878 announced that the Illinois State Grange had endorsed the measures then before Congress to remonetize silver.

<sup>2</sup> Copied in the *Prairie Farmer*, Oct. 19, 1878.

<sup>3</sup> *Prairie Farmer*, Sept. 5, 1878.

<sup>4</sup> In the *Prairie Farmer*, January 23, 1875 under the heading, "Is it drifting into politics?" Alonzo Golder, Grand Master of the Illinois State Grange, says in effect,—It is a conceded fact that the State Farmers' Association of Illinois was organized primarily for political purposes. In this line no doubt it will do good. But the Grange



were usually successful in framing such declarations to suit their own purposes. On the other hand, there was at the same time a feeling that the agitation against political action by the Grange was in fact a scarecrow, raised by the enemies of the order so as to exclude it from politics and so narrow its field of influence,<sup>1</sup> in order to meet both of these objections a plan of secret ballot, similar in many respect to the present system of primary elections, was adopted in some portions of the state, whereby the general sentiment might be discovered without the interference of politicians, and the members of the Grange enabled to unite on some candidate and so make their votes effective.<sup>2</sup> The results of this expedient were not satisfactory and the plan was therefore abandoned.

#### 5. *The Grange and the Middlemen: Buying, Selling, Mutual Insurance.*

Aside from its war on the railroads and its activity along political lines, the Grange found other fields of labor of which less is generally known. Of these less public activities perhaps none has accomplished more lasting good than the attempt to deal directly with the manufacturers, without the aid of middlemen. In speaking of the causes which worked toward making the Grange powerful as an organization, we have already mentioned briefly the inconveniences which the farmer suffered at the hands of the local dealers. In the minds of the founders of the order, probably no item in the farmers' budget of grievances received more attention, or was considered of more real importance to the farmer, than the disadvantages under which

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must let politics alone. Politicians and the Associations would gladly drag the Grange into politics but its fundamental principle is non-political, non-partisan. Some subordinate granges in the state have been led away from their true purpose and have taken sides on political questions. Such granges must beware in the future or they will be deprived of their charter. When the Grange becomes truly and avowedly a secret political organization its death knell is sounded.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas M. Richards in address to the State Farmers' Association in 1875 said the scarecrow "Beware how you meddle with politics", etc., is the cry of political schemers who fear the political influence of the Grange.

<sup>2</sup> *Prairie Farmer*, Sept. 20, 1873.

he was laboring in buying his necessary supplies. The middleman, however, shrewdly avoided antagonizing the farmer openly, and so allowed the railroads to bring upon themselves his first attack. Unlike the roads, they saw that their hold upon the farmer depended on keeping him in a good humor. Competition compelled them to be conciliatory and they dared not be so overbearing in their manners as were the railroad officials. Moreover, their existence, in limited numbers, was necessary, or at least helpful, in developing the resources of the new country. Many of the immigrants were not supplied with the implements necessary for carrying on their work and, what was worse, they lacked the necessaries of life, and would have been unable to support themselves until their crops were harvested but for the services of the middlemen, who furnished them with goods on credit. The middleman was careful to emphasize these facts in order to impress upon the farmer a sense of obligation for the leniency shown. The farmer, after receiving these favors, felt himself bound to trade with the man who had helped him. This was especially true if his crops were not sufficient to pay his debt; for whether or not his farm had been mortgaged as security, his freedom of action was none the less limited.

A system of credit was thus built up, similar in its main features to the system still in operation in the cotton growing states.<sup>1</sup> The chief difference, perhaps, lies in the fact that the northern farmer was more enterprising and could not endure the slavery of debt. He made use of all such means as the granger movement to rid himself of such obligations. It is nevertheless true that the disadvantages under which many of these early settlers labored made the struggle for existence severe. Having once put themselves into the power of the middlemen it was no easy task to escape. And unless the farmer adopted the motto, "Pay as you go," he was sure to become subject to the control of the merchant. Even then the prices that he had to pay were exorbitant; for there was little

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<sup>1</sup> M. B. Hammond, *The Cotton Industry in the United States*, chap. V.

competition in prices among the merchants, and it was impossible for the farmer to deal directly with the manufacturer.

The leaders of the Grange movement saw these difficulties and began to provide against them so far as possible. From the first, the principle of cash payments was enunciated, and this of itself marked a distinct step in advance for the farmers. They also tried the plan of concentrating their orders for the purpose of getting more favorable terms. That the agitation for co-operation in buying is as old as the State Grange may be seen from the fact that at its organization in 1872 the question of special rates on agricultural implements was taken up and discussed at some length.<sup>1</sup> Individual granges in various parts of the state had already made attempts in this direction. In most cases they attained a measure of success, but owing to the influence of the middlemen with the manufacturers, many obstacles were placed in the way and the results were not all that could be desired. When county granges were organized these matters passed into their hands and were usually carried on with more success than by the individual grange. County agents were chosen who gave bond for proper performance of duty, received a fixed salary, and gave their time to the work. The National Grange, independently of these more local movements, had succeeded in obtaining important concessions on condition that the Grange orders should be concentrated. But the national organization was unable to carry out its part of the contract because it lacked the power to control the orders of a single grange. The principle of direct dealings without the aid of middlemen had, however, been established and when the state granges undertook the matter in a busi-

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<sup>1</sup> A communication from a granger who signs himself C. C. B., appearing in the *Prairie Farmer* in May, 1872, furnishes additional evidence on the same point. He says that although he entered the Grange with little confidence in its plans, his distrust has been overcome by its success in obtaining advantageous rates for its members on agricultural implements, though working under discouraging circumstances. He states that although the granges in Lee and Whiteside counties are for the most part less than a year old, yet much had already been saved to the members by purchasing implements for cash direct from the manufacturers.



ness-like way they found little difficulty in getting important reductions. Illinois had a state purchasing agent as early as 1875.

The method followed in making purchases through the state agent was well adapted to secure substantial advantages. In the first place, the state agent was required to give a bond large enough to cover any funds which he was likely to hold at one time. The executive committee had the power of raising this bond as they deemed necessary. In this way the members of the Grange were secured against loss. The business with the dealers was transacted by the state agent. The orders were sent to him as early in the year as possible by the county or district agents, whose business it was to secure them from the secretary or agent of the sub-granges. As it was a cardinal principle with the Grange that payment should be made in cash, stress was also laid on this feature and a discount of ten per cent. allowed when cash was sent with the order. Receipts were given for this money by each individual who handled it. The company who received the order sent a receipt to the state agent but shipped the goods directly to the individual. Special rates were obtained on car-load lots. Large reductions were secured by this system and ample proof afforded that the middlemen were either making unusual profits or were conducting their business in a reckless or extravagant manner. In either case the farmer had suffered unnecessarily. Reapers for which the middleman charged \$275. were secured by the grangers for \$175. Threshers were reduced from \$300. to \$200., wagons from \$150. to \$90., sewing machines from \$75. and \$100. to \$40. and \$50., and other articles in like proportion.<sup>1</sup> Thus for a few years, the members of the Grange probably saved at least 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  per cent. on such purchases.<sup>2</sup> The middlemen, like the railroads, were unwilling to share their profits and tried to protect themselves. As long as they could prevent the wholesale firms from dealing

<sup>1</sup> Special Report 2, Misc. Ser. U. S. Dept. of Agriculture

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Estimated at from 25 per cent to 50 per cent. Country Gentleman, Mar. 2, 1875, estimated at from 50 per cent to 75 per cent.



with the grangers their task was comparatively easy, but when this failed they felt obliged to exterminate their new competitors. Accordingly they brought down prices to a point so low that many outside the Grange were enabled to buy of their local dealers at a rate lower than that secured by the grangers. They hoped to weaken, and perhaps destroy the Grange that they might again raise prices. Sometimes they went so far as to sell at a loss, and in some cases were soon forced out of business.

In so far as retail dealers were forced out of business by freer competition, the result sustained the argument of the grangers to the effect that the middleman was a dead weight upon society, adding nothing to the value of the goods and acting as a leech upon the purse of the producer. But as a matter of fact the decrease in the number of middlemen was by no means commensurate with the complaints filed against them. The charges should be examined critically. Such statements as those of C. E. Barney at the State Farmers' Association in 1875, need to be taken with considerable allowance. He said that in 1873 it cost the workers in Illinois \$29,000,000 to support the professional middlemen and loafers. Now, it is conceivable that the credit system may have been so hazardous to the dealer that this amount was only a fair remuneration for the work undertaken by the middlemen, or it may be that his estimate is exaggerated. But be this as it may, there can be no doubt that the granger movement was the means of securing a large reduction of prices, besides producing more healthful business conditions. More important than these results, however, was its effect as the entering wedge whereby the power of the credit system was broken, and the farmer enabled to free himself from its toils.

The venture, so successful in one line, was soon extended to others. It seemed to the farmer that if agricultural implements could be bought cheaper by ordering direct from the manufacturer, groceries, dry goods, and in fact all of his supplies, could be obtained from the wholesale dealer with equal

advantage. Enterprising business men were quick to take advantage of this belief and advertised their firms extensively as Grange supply houses. At this time Montgomery Ward's present department store was started as a supply store for grangers, and in its early days its patrons were chiefly members of the order. During the first years that the new plan of purchase was in operation the amount saved by grangers on commodities of all kinds may be fairly estimated at no less than 20 per cent. of the cost of their purchases at previous prices.<sup>1</sup> As competition reduced prices to a more stable scale, the average savings through the concentration of orders and direct dealings with the wholesale houses was probably not above 10% on the retail prices, though there are many individual instances after 1875 where grangers claim to have saved 20 per cent. and even 30 per cent. in this way.

As the system became more firmly established, both its advantages and disadvantages became more evident. A saving was still effected on some goods, but on others which could not be ordered in large quantities there was no gain. The need of a central depot of samples and repairs, and later of a local store, was felt. We hear of many such stores in 1875. At Woodstock, McHenry county a grange warehouse for agricultural implements was established.<sup>2</sup> In Tazewell county a grange store is reported as doing a business of from \$1,500 to \$2,000 a month.<sup>3</sup> Rockford had a sample grange store for Winnebago county.<sup>4</sup> The Shelby county grange established a co-operative store with a capital of \$5,000, divided into shares of \$10 each,<sup>5</sup> and the Stephenson county grange incorporated and established a grange store.<sup>6</sup> The Peoria county Co-operative Association was formed

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. saving on agricultural implements. The *Prairie Farmer* of Mar. 4, 1876 states that the patrons' department store at Dixon had saved at least 50% to those interested during the preceding year.

<sup>2</sup> *Prairie Farmer*, Mar. 13, 1875.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* July 15, 1876.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Jan. 23, 1875.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Mar. 20, 1875.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* June 26, 1873; Mar. 20, 1878.

with a capital stock of \$5,000 and with 200 stock-holders<sup>1</sup> Regarding the store thus established, an enthusiastic supporter writes to the effect that after being in operation four weeks it had proved an unparalled success, and that a plan to increase the capital stock to \$15,000 was under consideration. He further stated that the sales had amounted to as much as \$375 in one day.<sup>2</sup>

There were various plans for the management of these stores, but the one most successful, and probably most common, was similar to that known in England as the Rochdale system. The Grange was of course incorporated under the laws of the state, and the necessary officers elected; the amount of the capital stock, usually \$5,000, was fixed and shares were issued. The usual value of these shares seems to have been \$10. At first the general manager was usually a member of the Grange, but later on outsiders were sometimes hired to take charge. In spite of many successes, however, the grange stores were as a rule unprofitable in Illinois, although some prospered for a time and a number are said to be in operation yet. More often, however, they have suspended business entirely and for the most part now exist only in the memory of those living in the seventies.

Although the Grange was far more successful in co-operative buying than in co-operative selling, any discussion of the granger movement which fails to give some attention to the latter phase would certainly be incomplete. Attempts were made to get special rates and to do away with middlemen's profit. A granger firm of commission men was established at the Chicago stock yards, but soon failed.<sup>3</sup> In California, a gigantic scheme of wheat exportation failed because of poor management and opposition from dealers.<sup>4</sup> In Iowa, especially, and to some extent in other states, an attempt was made to get

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<sup>1</sup> *Prairie Farmer*, Dec. 12, 1874.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

control of the grain elevators. In that state two-thirds of the grain elevators were said to be in grange hands in 1874.<sup>1</sup> In some parts of Illinois the plan of hiring a general shipper was tried.<sup>2</sup>

There were numerous cases in this state where resolutions were passed by county and subordinate granges, recommending that grangers "hold their hogs" for a certain length of time or for a certain price. At its meeting in January, 1878, the State Grange recommended to its members that they "hold their hogs" for thirty days unless previously offered \$5 a hundred for dressed pork or \$4.25 for live hogs. Whether they gained their point in this particular case or not is a matter of little importance. Whatever success they may have had in individual cases the fact remains that they could not expect to fix prices contrary to the law of supply and demand. Unable to control the demand and failing to limit the supply permanently, their efforts soon ceased, though not before charges of dishonesty were made against grange agents who handled the funds.

The co-operative measures of the Grange, however, were not confined to the buying and selling of goods. They also attempted to apply the principle to insurance. There was just cause for dissatisfaction, in these early days, with the prevailing methods of insurance. Frauds were by no means unusual, and much difficulty was experienced by policy holders in making collections in case of loss. An intimation of the feeling may be found in the statement in the *Prairie Farmer* that the Grange "has made necessary life insurance associations on some plan that will keep the officers out of the penitentiary and the patrons out of the poor-house". Mutual companies for both property and life insurance were organized in various localities. Property insurance was much the more common. The majority of the companies were established on the township plan, though many preferred a more extensive organization, even at the

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<sup>1</sup> Popular Science monthly 32:371.

<sup>2</sup> Country Gentleman, 1872, p. 804, speaks of a general shipper in Illinois who received a remuneration of  $\frac{1}{2}$ c. a bushel on grain handled.



start, and as time passed the larger companies grew in favor and were not always confined within township or even county lines. In 1875 blanks were provided by the State Grange to facilitate the organization of mutual fire insurance companies, and in 1876 the Grange resolved to push the idea of the Patrons' Aid Society or Life Insurance for the Grange, so that insurance might be had at actual cost.<sup>1</sup> In this enterprise as in all others they met with obstacles. In Macon county a "traveling bummer"<sup>2</sup> had succeeded in swindling some credulous ones through the organization of "boards of life insurance." Then, too, the farmers lacked experience, and hence many companies were poorly managed. But in spite of all difficulties the plan was particularly successful even at the time, and in later years has been more fully developed.

#### 6. *Fraternal, Social and Educational Features.*

When the Grange was first organized, three lines of activity were emphasized,—social, educational and business. Education was the slogan. The evils to which the farmer was subjected were attributed to ignorance. It was asserted that the railroads would not impose on the farmer if he had a better knowledge of business methods, neither would the middlemen and the politicians be able to take advantage of him so easily if he were better informed. The farmer's isolation kept him from enjoying the benefits of social intercourse, and the social side of his nature needed development in order to give him confidence in dealing with others. To assist in bringing about these results a program was to be given in every subordinate grange meeting—recitations, songs, and discussions of various topics of interest to the farmer. Without some opportunity of coming together such as was afforded by the Grange, the farmer would not realize the meaning of current events. His daily round of toil discouraged rather than stimulated efforts to keep well in-

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<sup>1</sup> *Prairie Farmer*, July 15, 1876.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, Mar. 1, 1843.

formed, and unless there was something to spur him on he would not make the necessary effort. He had been led to believe that education and farming, like oil and water, would not mix; that it was impossible for him to use the educational advantages within reach of others. It was within the sphere of the Grange to teach the farmer that all kinds of education are open to him, that it is worth his while to make the effort necessary to acquire information and to learn how to use it. For this purpose the National Grange instituted its system of crop reports, published and sent out hundreds of thousands of tracts among the farmers and urged the need of keeping up with the times. For the same purpose the State Grange sent out deputies and lecturers, who were expected to disseminate information on agricultural topics. The subordinate grange paid the bills and its members were supposed to reap the benefits. The effect of these efforts was noticeable. In some cases, perhaps extreme, though mentioned quite frequently in the literature of the time, this campaign of education, combined with a freer social intercourse, developed among grangers a higher respect for one another's opinions and a more careful attention to their own personal appearance, both in dress and action. One pastor wrote of the remarkable change in the "walk and conversation of his flock", and attributed it to the organization of a grange among them. Frequently there was an increased demand for books and oftentimes grange libraries were established. A grange was organized in one community where previously but one newspaper had been taken and as a result the number of subscriptions soon increased to thirty.<sup>1</sup> Thus there is abundant evidence to show that the Grange increased the desire for knowledge and aided in its dissemination. But not only did the farmers read more; they also did more writing for the papers, either to ask questions of their own or to reply to the questions of others. In this way the movement for farmers' institutes was greatly advanced, perhaps originated. The ambition to write for the papers was still

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<sup>1</sup> Special Report 2 p. 60.

further stimulated by some of the agricultural papers, which offered prizes for the best essays written by school children under a certain age, on some specified subject, usually related to the Grange.

For a few years, while the "war" upon the railroads and middlemen was at its height, the educational development of the order was arrested or, at least, overshadowed. But as the Grange grew older and the so-called "explosion of wrath" had spent its force, the attention of the members became confined more and more to the social and educational features set forth in its constitution. As already pointed out, its business activity has continued to the present, but occupies a much smaller share of its attention than formerly. It should not be understood, however, that the Grange has entirely ceased to exert political influence in the broad sense of the term; but so far as aggressive action along partisan lines is concerned, it may fairly be said to be out of politics.

In the early seventies, the Grange, like other agricultural societies, took much interest in county fairs. About the same time picnics came into much favor. They were planned with as much enthusiasm and carried out with as much energy as other granger undertakings, but in only two years, 1872 and 1873, did they assume much importance. Like other projects of the Grange, they failed to satisfy its members, many of whom were feverishly seeking impossible results and hence were destined to disappointment.

However, such agencies as picnics and county fairs fostered the spirit of fraternity among the members of the order. This was shown in the winter of 1874-75 when the poor crops of the preceding harvest had brought suffering to Kansas and other states west of the Mississippi. The grangers of Kansas took the matter in hand and established a system of organized relief. Members in other states gave their assistance in the work. Illinois was active in the work and accomplished much in relief of suffering. It is worth while to note that assistance given by grangers was not limited to members of the order but was ex-

tended to any who were in actual want. It is true that other organizations and individuals contributed toward relieving the same needs ; but the grangers deserve credit for initiating the movement.

### 7. *The Grange and Subsequent Organizations.*

There is little difficulty in tracing the relation between the different organizations mentioned in this paper. They existed about the same time, were made necessary by the same conditions, and were striving for much the same ends.<sup>1</sup> There was much rivalry among them, amounting, in the case of clubs and granges, almost to open hostility.<sup>2</sup> There seems to be a connection also between the movement toward organization at this time and the movements which have occurred among farmers since that time. There is difficulty in determining how much the later movements were affected by the earlier ones, but a careful analysis brings out many points of similarity. In the membership of the grange it is easy to recognize two general classes, the conservative and the radical. The conservative element, relatively smaller in number, comprised many of the most progressive farmers of the country. It might perhaps, be said to represent fairly the best element among the farming population, who after thoughtful consideration had come to the conclusion that much might be gained through organization, and for that reason had joined the order. The radical wing was made up from the chronically dissatisfied element among the farming classes. Their ideas regarding reforms were more or less hazy and they were ready to cast in their lot with any new movement which created a stir. It was their function to call attention to existing evils rather than to reform them, for they were incapable of following one idea con-

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<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that as early as 1874 an organization known as Sovereigns of Industry had been formed among mechanics and laborers, especially in the New England states, upon a plan very similar to, and probably copied from, the Patrons of Husbandry.

<sup>2</sup> See report of Secretary S. M. Smith at the State Farmers' Association, 1873.



sistently for any length of time. Thus after a few years of activity in the grange they became discontented. The ideal state of their imagination was not immediately reached. They deserted the grange. Other organizations, such as the Farmers' Alliance and the Farmers' Mutual Benefit Association, came into prominence and absorbed the energies of the radicals. But just as before, the radical, discontented element soon left the ranks. Had there been the same need in the country, these organizations might have made themselves felt as strongly as did the Grange in its palmyest days. Without discussing the actual accomplishments of these organizations it will be sufficient to note that their influence is now an unimportant factor. They, too, failed to realize the ideals of many of their partisans, and their membership decreased. The Populist movement also, though too recent to admit of unbiased discussion, seems to bear a close resemblance to the Grange in many features, especially in its anti-monopolistic sentiments.

#### 8. *Estimate of The Grange.*

Much has already been said regarding the differences in the character and policy of the Grange at different periods of its history. In the seventies it had a mushroom growth, and was characterized by a feverish activity in supporting principles somewhat vague, but in general seeking reform through legislation. This period was followed by a reaction and a striking decrease in membership. Since 1880 there has been a revival, and the Grange, with a gradually increasing membership has been able to pursue a well-defined policy, emphasizing the need of education and the necessity for self-improvement. The granger movement has been frequently misunderstood, and it is difficult even yet to form a just estimate of it. It is true that many actions of the Grange will not bear a close scrutiny. Some of the first laws passed during their period of greatest legislative influence, were unjust to other classes. But on the other hand they accomplished much good. The objectionable

features of the laws were soon removed and the advantages made permanent. The attention of the people was called to railroad abuses and their ingenuity directed toward the discovery of a remedy. The state railway commissions established in some of the states by the grangers paved the way for the Inter-State Commerce Commission. Aside from all this the political influence of the farmer has improved in almost every particular since the organization of the Grange. It is impossible to determine just how much of this improvement is due to the Grange, but it would be manifestly unfair to say that improvement would have come without the aid of the Grange and that the granger movement had no real value. Indeed, when we recall its many lines of activity, its energy, its determination, its power of concentration, its enthusiasm, the ability of its leaders, and its widespread organization, there need be no hesitation in affirming that no small share of the political, social and industrial progress of the farmer in Illinois may be traced to the Grange.

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