

# How the League Will Build Up Towns

## South Dakota Is the First State to Realize the Value of Home-Owned Industries—Friendly Cities Will Draw Farmers' Trade

BY A. B. GILBERT

**D**OES South Dakota have the most intelligent towns in the Northwest? The evidence would seem to point that way, for many of the wide-awake towns of that state are planning to increase their size by taking advantage of the League program of the farmers. They realize that the farmers mean business. They realize that we are coming into an era of co-operation and state ownership which will build local markets, creameries, packing plants, cold storage houses, etc.

They, like the farmers, will lose nothing and gain much when outside domination of production and distribution is removed. Consequently these towns are now surveying themselves to find out what their good points are and each is telling the farmers why that particular city would be a splendid location for enterprises of the new kind. Their good sense is deserving imitation by towns in other League states.

### GREAT CHANCE FOR WIDE-AWAKE TOWNS

In the old days of horse-drawn vehicles we needed more towns in the Northwest than we do now. That is why fully a third of our towns are now going behind and nearly a third more are having no growth. The automobile makes it easy for farmers to travel far to towns they prefer. But this situation is just the opportunity for the wide-awake town to make itself secure and to flourish. The new conditions which must inevitably kill off some towns because there are too many of them for modern needs will just as surely give others a new life. Most of them are still asleep, unaware that the times have changed. Just as the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce, which expects to go back to wheat gambling before the ink is dry on the final peace agreement, some of these towns will be dead before they ever wake up. To use a phrase of the stock brokers, "Now is the time to get in on the ground floor" for the small towns, before the new conditions and the steps to be taken are apparent to all.

Inasmuch as the growth of the town depends on getting farmers to come in to trade, we can say:

Happy is the town which contains a farmers' co-operative elevator because this binds the farmers to it. Again we can say: More happy still is the town which contains a co-operative creamery because this brings the farmers in several times a week.

The more the town possesses in the way of actual investments by co-operating farmers, the more of a cinch it has on the future. The small-town business man, instead of fighting these co-operative ventures as he has so frequently in the past, should thank God and the sticking spirit of the farmers that they are there. If he uses any sense at all, they are as good as insurance policies against future loss. They solve the all-important problem of getting the farmers in the town.

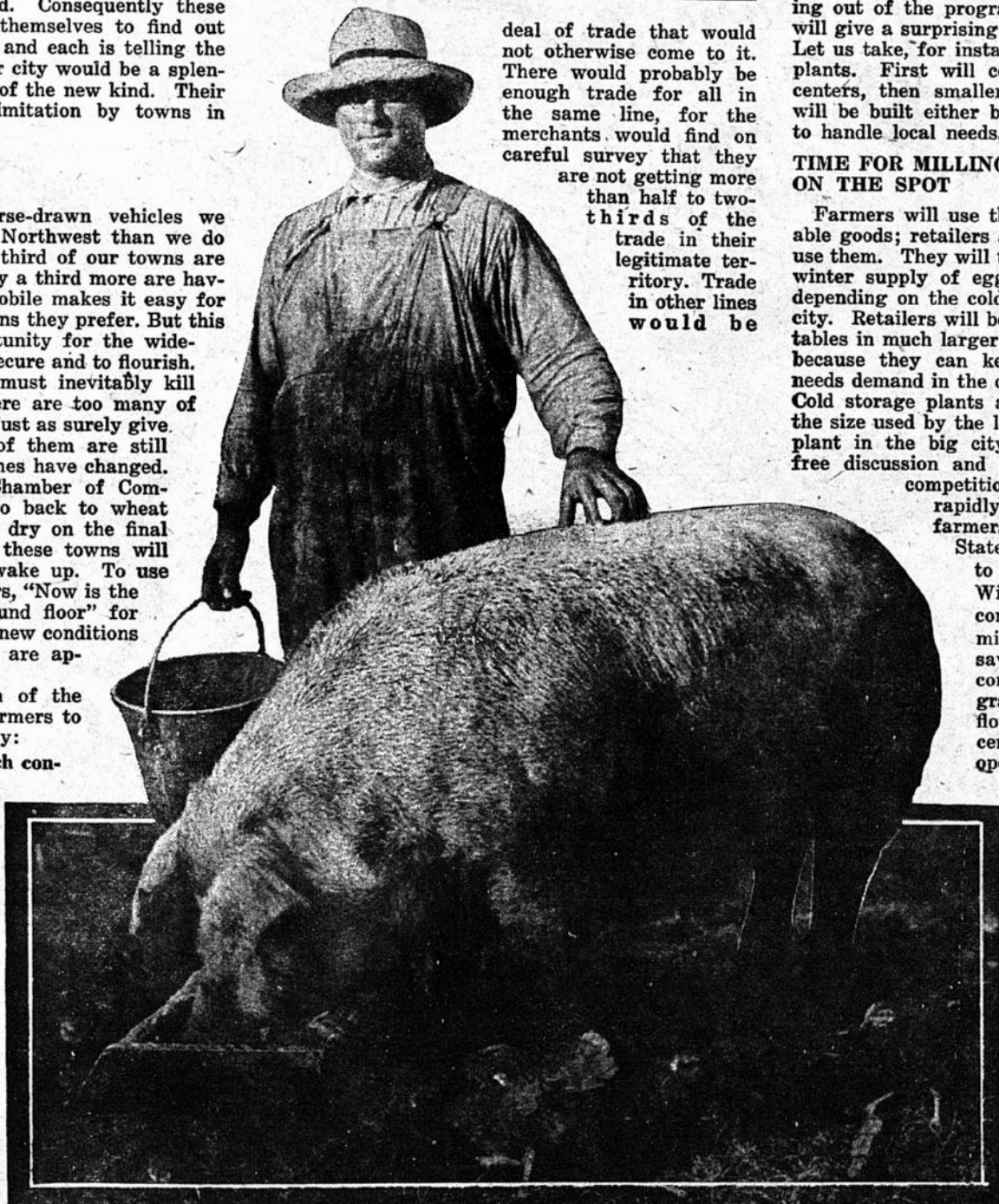
### THE BENEFIT FROM A FARMER-OWNED PAPER

These co-operative enterprises almost always add to the volume of the particular line of business going through the town, for farmers come in to get the saving and they come in on principle. What, for instance, does the old-line elevator do for the town which the co-operative elevator does

not improve upon? Or, to go a little out of the field of strict business, what town paper could have such influence as an advertising medium to draw farmers in as one which the farmers have bought and which they run co-operatively? It reaches those farmers who may be a little sore at all towns because of the treatment they have received from misrepresentatives of the towns, better than any other paper could.

Even the co-operative store which big business holds up to the small retailer as a green-eyed monster, in almost every case would be an advantage to the town in that it would bring in a great

### BATES IS HIS NAME



deal of trade that would not otherwise come to it. There would probably be enough trade for all in the same line, for the merchants would find on careful survey that they are not getting more than half to two-thirds of the trade in their legitimate territory. Trade in other lines would be

In the words of the South Dakota Leader, M. P. Bates, League candidate for governor of that state, is a hog slopper. This picture, taken on his farm, proves it. His fat friend is his grand champion Chester White boar. Yes, both look like winners to the farmers. The League nominee is famed as a breeder of purebred hogs and Hereford cattle.

handed a nice volume of increased business—very profitable business in fact because the fixed charges which the normal business meets would not be any larger with the larger trade.

The hollowness of the special interest howl against co-operation and especially co-operative stores, is shown by the absolute silence of these same interests on the chain store, an enemy many times more dangerous to the independent retailer than co-operative stores could possibly be. Big business feeds them with prices so much lower than it extorts from the independent retailer. Hence

their ability to undersell. Lumber yards, clothing stores, grocery stores, banks, etc., in chains of even 20 or more can be found all over the Northwest. Some of these chains have more than a thousand local stores each. Back of many of the chain stores are the millions of the great financiers, such as J. D. Rockefeller. Yet there is not a peep about these and at the same time the kept press gets red in the face over the farmers' own stores in the state of North Dakota. The co-operative store brings in new trade; the chain store grabs what the town already has.

If the co-operation we now have binds farmers to the town and promises to keep it on the map, the co-operation of the future when the farmers have secured political power and protection will be even more potent to build it up. The full working out of the program of the organized farmers will give a surprising amount of local development. Let us take, for instance, state-owned cold storage plants. First will come the plants in the large centers, then smaller plants in the small towns will be built either by the state or co-operatively to handle local needs.

### TIME FOR MILLING ON THE SPOT

Farmers will use them to preserve their perishable goods; retailers and townspeople will likewise use them. They will thus, for example, lay in their winter supply of eggs for themselves instead of depending on the cold storage plant in the distant city. Retailers will be able to buy fruits and vegetables in much larger quantity without fear of loss because they can keep all but what immediate needs demand in the community cold storage plant. Cold storage plants are practicable in units from the size used by the local butcher to the mammoth plant in the big city. With an opportunity for free discussion and with protection from unfair competition, these plants will spring up rapidly in towns favorable to the farmers.

State-owned flour mills will lead to a similar local development. With the grip of the milling combine broken, more of the milling will be done locally to save the freight and other costs connected with sending out the grain and bringing back the flour and feeds from the distant centers. State-owned and co-operatively owned elevators, located in the best towns, will replace the present system. There will be fewer of them but the town which gets one will have a larger business than it could have otherwise. Local warehousing will be developed to a much greater extent.

Government ownership of railroads, which will undoubtedly be retained through the influence of organized farmers, will so remove the present and past discriminations against local industry that wonderful developments in this line may be expected. What may come to pass may be seen from what happened in Denmark when farmers and workers got control of the government. This little country, one-fifth the size of the state of

Minnesota, has more than 40 local packing plants. In the United States, on the other hand, we now send stock hundreds, if not thousands, of miles away and then bring back over these magnificent, monopoly-made distances the meat products needed locally.

Out of the victory of the people over the special interests now dominating politics and business, will shortly come a more balanced community industrial life. Here we touch the weakest spot in the local community in America. Much of our farm work is seasonal and the community offers