

Hay-Foot, Straw-Foot.

Big Business has been accustomed so long to implicit obedience that it is little wonder it should "get off on the wrong foot" when the People's mandate begins to be heard. First it is tariff reduction; then "currency" reform; next it will be abolition (more or less) of patent monopoly; and bye and bye—well, it is a good beginning anyway. It is an inspiring sight, this raw recruit in the army of the Common Good, stepping along at the word of the Commander-in-Chief, the President of the United States himself. Some day the raw recruit will be a well-trained, obedient, and efficient soldier-boy. For the present it is hay-foot, straw-foot, hay-foot, straw-foot—an inspiring sight indeed!

HARRY W. OLNEY.



Where Does the Farmer Come In?

Seldom has the irony of fate been more dramatically manifested than in the case of the American farmer? Upon his broad and patient shoulders has rested the protective tariff system. He was far removed from the immediate benefits, but he was so emphatically assured they would reach him that he unquestioningly supported the system. Keep out foreign goods, said the manufacturer, and I will pay high wages to the American workingmen, and they will buy of the American farmer. And as an evidence of good faith the high tariff advocate put duties on grains, meats, and dairy products. It never occurred to the farmer that the fact that foodstuffs were going out while manufactures were coming into the country might result in a different effect from the same cause. The effect upon American wages may be read in the recent strikes and labor investigations.

Meantime, however, the country settled up, a home market for farm products appeared, prices began to advance, and the farmer seemed destined at last to reap where he had so long sown. But a change came over the country. High prices for farm products became associated in people's minds with the high cost of living, and the very thing which the protectionist had promised became the one thing to be removed. Thus, at the moment when the protective duties became operative, they were withdrawn. Will he profit by the experience? Other measures are urged for the removal of oppressive conditions, and the farmer is again brought forward as a sacrifice. He is told that the proposition to exempt improvements from taxation will victimize him for the benefit of the city property holder. Will he repeat his former folly?

s. o.

Missouri's Uninformed State Agricultural Secretary.

The secretary of Missouri's State Board of Agriculture, Mr. Jewell Mayes, bitterly opposes the Singletax. He advocates continued taxation of improvements on farms, livestock, crops and other labor products in preference to increasing the tax bills of holders of unused lands and of corporation franchises. Strangely enough, in taking this position he declares that he is "devoting his time largely to the upbuilding of agriculture in Missouri." Just how agriculture is to be built up by increasing a farmer's taxes in proportion to his industry Mr. Mayes does not explain. He seems instead to be favoring a system that penalizes upbuilding of agriculture. Perhaps he is not aware of the fact that more land values are in city lots, mining lands, utility franchises and unused lands generally than on farms tilled by their owners. If he had this information he would realize that under the Singletax the tax bills of working farmers would be materially cut down. At the same time if he does not have this information then how much knowledge concerning agricultural conditions is the secretary of the Missouri State Board of Agriculture required to have?

s. d.



Ford and the Labor Problem.

It may surprise some people to learn that Henry Ford has not solved the labor problem, nor made any approach toward doing so. Mr. Ford makes this quite clear in his latest reported announcement. Therein he declares his intention to regulate the manner of living of his employes. He thus announces himself as a despot—a benevolent despot, undoubtedly—but a despot nevertheless. Of course his employes won't like it. They might not object to friendly advice, but every man with any self-respect must feel inclined to resent dictation from his employer concerning matters that do not concern the latter. But they will probably submit. They will arrange their domestic affairs in accord with Mr. Ford's wishes, not as they themselves would have them. They will do this because they are not free men. The fact that they submit to his wishes in this matter shows that they would in other matters. The same system that confers despotic power on Mr. Ford can and frequently does confer power on masters who are not so benevolent. It is not within the power of any employer to solve the labor problem. Nothing can do that short of the destruction of legalized privilege. "What can the rich man do to improve the condition of labor?"