

THE GRANGE VISITOR

ISSUED SEMI-MONTHLY
BY THE EXECUTIVE
Michigan State



MONTHLY
COMMITTEE OF THE
Grange, P. of H.

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J. J. WOODMAN, : Publishing Committee.
J. T. COBB, . . . }

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For explanation as to change in
size of VISITOR, see Secretary's De-
partment.

Under existing regulations we are
required to send a copy free to the
Master of each Subordinate Grange,
We shall also send a copy free to all
Secretary's who send us ten or more
names of subscribers for one year,
with pay for the same.

We cannot longer furnish it free
to those who do not work for it. We
must have something for something.

THE SONG OF THE AXE.

Oh, a loyal thing is the woodman's axe,
And a terror to freeman's foes,
For it clears the path for a nation's tracks
As the empire westward goes.

Oh, a thing of joy is the woodman's axe,
For it makes the old homestead bright.
And it sees that the hearthstone never lacks
Good heart of a cold, dreary night.

Oh, a sturdy thing is the woodman's axe,
And the sturdy woodman's blows,
Makes his arms as hard as the wood he hacks,
And his cheeks as red as a rose.

In the early morn o'er the crested snow
To the woods he hastens away,
And you hear the steady blow upon blow
Of his good, sharp axe all day.

The tall, old trees who've swayed in the breeze,
And have braved a thousand storms,
Are losing their strength by sure degrees,
At each stroke of the woodman's arm.

Hark! the rebound of a crashing sound!
'Tis another old oak gone down,
Bearing his satellites crushed to the ground,
Like a king when he loses his crown.

Before the strong woodman's axe they dumb,
Their tough hearts shake with fears,
And one by one they're forced to succumb—
These braves of a hundred years.

And all the day long they're strewn along,
Like giants slain in a fight,
And the woodman backs away with a song,
For he thinks of his home and the night.

At his home awaits, at the garden gates,
His pet little girl with her sled,
And on the pond his boys with their skates,
And their cheeks are all rosy red.

Within his own doors o'er the oaken floors
The old hearth-stone is laughing and bright,
And the honest wife, whom he almost adores,
Will welcome him home with delight.

Oh, a thing of strength is the woodman's axe!
For it brightens the faces at home,
And opens the path for an empire's track
In the ages yet to come.

Facts Worth Considering.

From the Husbandman.

ELMIRA, N. Y., Oct. 20, 1877.

W. A. ARMSTRONG, Secretary Farmers' Club:—It has occurred to me that the farmers of the Club may very properly express their opinions on a subject in which I am sure they must feel a lively interest, for it affects directly the profits of their labors. I allude to taxation.

It has been said, that the true business of the farmers is to till the soil—to produce the grain, the meat and the fruits, not only for his own sustenance but for the feeding of all people who have advanced to what may be styled, the wants of civilization. It has also been said by certain persons, "wise in their own conceit," that the closer attention farmers give to the business so defined, the better for them, leaving public questions to be managed by the classes more competent to deal with them. It is true we must depend on farmers to furnish us food and the staples from which raiment is made. But in my judgment, they should not necessarily be confined to such service.

In this country a little more than one half of the population is engaged in agriculture. A little more than half the votes may be

cast by this class. I say *may* be cast, for it is a fact that no other class has manifested so much indifference about exercising the right of suffrage. Now, with these facts in view, it is quite surprising that any person should seriously assert that farmers should confine their labors to fields and the care of their animals to the exclusion of the important duties which rest alike upon all the people in a country where self-government is established. Somebody must make the laws. If it be said that farmers have their special business and should not step beyond it to take part in the administration of public affairs, the same rule would confine the merchant to his counting-room, the banker to his counter, the lawyer to his office, the manufacturer to his shop, the mechanic to his chosen task, and so with all classes.

The theory of our government is that the people make the laws. But they can not do it collectively so they depute persons selected from their number to do the work for all. It is reasonable to suppose that men who have fair intelligence and at the same time happen to be farmers should know what are the wants of their profession, just as well as other men with a like degree of intelligence, who happen to be lawyers would know the needs of agriculture. But those farmers who constitute a majority of the voters and who own more than half the wealth of the nation, are prone to such self-abnegation that they select from the other class, the men to declare the legal status of their wealth, the tenure by which it shall be held, and what proportion of its products shall be set apart each year to defray the government expense.

And—heaven defend us—a pressure of fate has established the custom of selecting lawyers for all this important work. They do not hesitate to tell us that farmers are not competent to make laws. A man with a ravenous appetite sat down to a dinner of apple dumplings enough for two men of ordinary capacity. His little boy looking wistfully at the plate said, "I would like a dumpling." "You must not have it," said the father. "They are not good for little boys," and straightway he devoured them all. Are farmers well satisfied that men in other business, or without business should say what is good for them, and then give it the solemn sanction of law? Perhaps you will say I have wandered from the subject, taxation, but it seems to me that I have touched the reason why unjust taxation is fastened upon agriculture, and indicated the way by which it can be equalized; or rather the means by which such equalization can be attained. Do not suppose I am asking for legisla-

tion. On the contrary, if my argument is good for anything, I have been showing that we have already had too much of that, and what we now want is its correction. I would have all the interests, all the industries of the country represented in the law-making bodies, and then we may be sure that all will be well and justly considered.

As matters are managed, the productive interests of our country are made to bear by far too great a share of the taxes. I believe it will continue to be so until the men engaged in these industries give their attention to making legislatures with direct reference to adjusting the laws governing assessments in such manner that all property of every kind, shall take its just share of taxes, and such a legislature will never be made of men who add nothing to the wealth of the country.
REGNAT POPULUS.

THE farmers of Illinois, opposed to the Grange, organized Farmers' Associations and admitted to membership all classes of society. The secretary says in his last report: "The advisory board admitted many to our conventions who had no real sympathy with our reform, or with any of the objects for which our association was organized. These men disregarded the principles of the association and nominated men who either openly repudiated the principles, or were silent upon them." As soon as those labor associations admitted parties not in sympathy with the association, the object they sought to accomplish was defeated. We have the same danger to guard against in our Order. The ballot is our only safe guard. If we have the moral courage to use it, when a doubtful candidate applies for admission, we are safe.

THE Worthy Master of the Louisiana State Grange speaking of the subordinate Granges sending letters to the Grange papers says:

"I sincerely wish that the granges would adopt this plan of letting us know their present condition and their prospects and plans for the future. It is encouraging to hear that some Granges are engaged in earnest work and are making their influence felt for good. It is important also to hear the complaints of those who have grievances which ought to be known, and if possible corrected. Don't have the least fear of "pitching into" the officers of the State Grange. They are the servants of the Order, and are always glad to be reminded of any neglect or oversight on their part."

—The next number will contain not only the report of the Executive Committee of the State Grange, but others matters of interest to the Order.

Master's Department.

J. J. WOODMAN, PAW PAW

FIFTH ANNUAL SESSION

Michigan State Grange.—Patrons of Husbandry.

MASTER'S ADDRESS.

WORTHY PATRONS:—It is required by the Constitution of the Order, that the State Grange shall meet annually to consider and act upon such subjects, as wisdom, gathered from practical experience, indicate as necessary for the welfare of the Organization; and custom makes it the duty of the Master to communicate to the State Grange, such matters of interest, relating to the objects and aims of the Order as well as the condition, and wants of the Subordinate Grange, as circumstances may seem to require. On the fourth of December, 1867, the nucleus of an organization of farmers was formed in the city of Washington. This was the first attempt in the history of this country, if not of the world, to organize the tillers of the soil, for social and mental culture, and the protection of their interests.

The idea of such an organization was first conceived by a practical farmer, who had gathered much valuable information, in relation to the condition and wants of the agricultural interests of the United States, from extensive travel and close observation, while in the employment of the agricultural department at Washington. For several years but little progress was made, and at the 5th annual meeting of that organization, called the National Grange, but one Master of a State Grange was present.

It was not until the 6th annual meeting held at Georgetown, D. C., in January, 1873, that the National Grange was permanently organized and incorporated.

Representatives from nine States were present at that meeting, and took part in making the organization permanent. From that time the growth of the Order was rapid, and at the next annual meeting, representatives from thirty three States and Territories, appeared and took part in the deliberations of the session.

The organization of Subordinate Granges in this State commenced near the close of the year 1872, and this State Grange was organized April 15, 1873, hence five years of the practical work of the Order in this State has passed into history, and the Order yet remains strong and prosperous. The doubts and misgivings which many entertained in regard to its perpetuity have been dispelled, and the beautiful Grange Halls which dot almost every portion of our State, the places of business, co-operative stores, means provided for, and success of, practical co-operation in Subordinate Granges, the success which has attended our State and local business agencies, the intimate and satisfactory business relations which have been established with manufacturers and dealers, the general success which has attended every business enterprise, which has emanated from the properly constituted authority of the Order, the increased confidence, and practical business habits, which members of the Order have acquired, by social intercourse with each other, more intimate relations with business men, general reading and practical discussions in the Grange, as well as the evidences of reviving prosperity of farmers, tell in language too plain to be misunderstood, that the Order is not only doing the work for which it was designed,

but has become one of the fixed institutions of the land.

To you the chosen representatives of the Subordinate Granges of Michigan is delegated power to make such rules and regulations, for the government of the Order in this State, and recommend such changes in the Constitution and laws of the National Grange, as the experience of the past have proved necessary for the welfare and general prosperity of the Subordinate Granges. Practically, all there is of the Order is in the Subordinate Granges, for there all power lies, and from them all authority emanates—The County, State and National Granges, are but representative bodies, deriving all their powers from the Subordinate Granges, from which the representatives are chosen. Legislative bodies are largely made up of members who have had no parliamentary training, or practical experience in legislation, consequently much valuable time is necessarily consumed at the beginning of each session in studying parliamentary law, and learning the routine of legislation. This has been in a large degree obviated in our Order, by a wise provision in our Organic Law, which provides, that "the State Grange shall be composed of Masters and Past Masters of Subordinate Granges and their wives who are Matrons." This calls to the State Grange, those whose position has been such as to give them one year's practice in parliamentary usage, and require them to become thoroughly acquainted with all of the work of the Order, as well as the condition and wants of the Subordinate Granges.

To the knowledge and experience thus acquired, can be ascribed much of the practical work, and ability to dispatch business, which has characterized the sessions of the State Grange; and it gives me great confidence, to know that this body, is composed of members who have learned from experience derived from untiring work in the organization, what is most needed to promote the good of the Order in this State. It would therefore be presuming on my part to endeavor to instruct you. Representatives should obey the instructions, and endeavor to gratify the wishes of their constituents, when fully made known, or decline to represent them; but to make radical changes in the constitution and laws of the Order, to gratify the notions of a few, who form conclusions without duly considering the effects of the changes asked for, would soon destroy every vestige of harmony in laws and work of the Order; and weaken, if not destroy the efficacy of the organization.

I will call your attention to a few subjects, which in my judgment are worthy of your consideration; and for principles to guide you in your deliberations, I refer you to the Declaration of Purposes of the Order, adopted by the National Grange, and published to the world.

So wise and just are the objects there set forth, that no opposer of our Organization has ever attempted to criticize them. The opposition we have encountered, has been more the result of imagination than reality, and must cease when our principles and purposes are fully understood.

WORK OF THE ORDER.

Our Organization was formed for wise and beneficent purposes, and its work is not confined to the individual benefit of its members, but reaches out to the good of our country and mankind. We desire "equality, equity, and fairness protection for the weak, restraint upon the strong, in short justly distributed burdens, and justly distributed powers." As citizens we

have duties to perform and interests to protect; and shall labor for the perpetuity of our Republican institutions, recognizing that "difference of opinion is no crime, but progress towards truth is made by differences of opinion, while the fault lies in the bitterness of controversy." Believing that "sectionalism is, and of right should be, dead and buried with the past," in our agricultural and fraternal brotherhood "we recognize no north, no south, no east, no west."

Our government is "of the People and for the People." It is the first system of Constitutional Government founded upon political equality, and the general consent of the governed. "Chartered Governments," called Republics had existed, but they conferred only a partial franchise, and limited civil privileges; but our government, deriving its authority from the true source of power the whole people, must be what the people make it. The Congress of the United States, composed of members chosen by the people to legislate for their interests, is now in session, and as the soil is the great source of wealth, is it not unreasonable to claim, that some of the legislation of the country should be to encourage and protect the Agricultural interests, or at least should not be so directed as to benefit other interests at the expense of agriculture. And how can this be accomplished in the absence of representatives of that interest in Congress, unless it be by discussion, petitions, and resolutions of associations and bodies, authorized to act and speak in the interests of Husbandry? Such an association is the Order of Patrons of Husbandry; and such a body is this. All the other great interests of the country have not only their representatives in Congress, but their organizations to which their representatives look for instructions. Hence influences both direct and powerful operate to influence legislation for their benefit, while unorganized, and unrepresented interests, are necessarily neglected, and often suffer. This was fully demonstrated by the Tariff Legislation in 1872.—When a bill was introduced to reduce the tariff upon lumber, which would materially effect the lumber interests of the country, that interest in Michigan had a representative there, who sprang to his feet and raised his protest against the passage of the unjust measure, and calling to his aid his colleges from this State, they unitedly, with a will and a persistency that was commendable, fought the odious bill and defeated it. But when a bill was brought forward in the interest of speculators, and derogatory to that of farmers, to reduce the tariff on wool no one was there to raise his voice against it, and as farmers were unorganized, with no means of co-operation whereby they could protest against the outrage, it became a law, and not one wool grower in a hundred knew what was being done, or had been done, until the price of wool began to tumble. The effect of that act was to encourage the importation of cheap wool, which was thrown upon the market in competition with our domestic wool, reducing the price of the latter below the actual cost of production.

The tariff was restored in 1874, yet during the two years that it was off the importation of wool and woolen goods, which for eleven years prior to the reduction in 1872 had averaged annually of wool 52,058,843 pounds, costing in gold at the port of shipment, \$3,125,082; and woollens valued in gold at \$33,099,301. were increased to 122,256,499 lbs. of wool in 1872, costing in gold \$26,214,195, and woollens valued at \$52,408,921. In 1873,

there was imported 85,496,049 lbs. of wool, costing in gold \$20,433,938, and woollens valued at \$51,075,492, making in two years, \$150,132,546 of the gold of the country paid to foreign countries for wool and woolen fabrics, and this exclusive of shoddy, the importations of which have been large.

For 35 years prior to January 1st, 1862, the average price of wool in this country was for fine, 50 4-10c, medium, 42 4-5c, and coarse, 35 1/2c per lb., on a gold basis; and yet in 1876, with an inflated currency, the average price realized by the farmers for that clip, did not exceed 25 cents per pound.

The losses sustained by the farmers of Michigan alone, by this one act, passed without their knowledge or consent, estimated at more than two millions of dollars, can never be recovered, but the experience so dearly bought, cannot fail to stimulate them to be more watchful of their interests in the future. I have dwelt upon this subject, for the reason, that speculators are again raising the cry of "cheap wool," and the present Congress will be pressed by influences and arguments to reduce, if not entirely remove the duties upon wool and woolen fabrics. Hence it is of vital importance that, not only the State Grange of Michigan, but every State, County, and Subordinate Grange in the land, should by resolutions speak upon this subject, and make their influence felt.

THE AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT AT WASHINGTON

should be made in reality what it is claimed to be, "The Department of Agriculture of the United States; and its primary object should be to protect and foster every branch of agriculture, encourage a higher and more practical education for farmers sons and daughters, and stimulate home production, so as to give employment to labor.—It should be presided over by a scientific practical farmer, who should be made a member of the Cabinet, having a voice where his influence can be direct with the government.

PATENT LAWS.

Congress should be petitioned to so revise the patent laws, as to protect innocent parties, in using any article, sold in the market, and prevent the extension of patents beyond the time for which they were first granted.

EQUAL PROTECTION.

A tariff is a tax or duty levied by the government, upon the products of other countries, which are imported into the United States; and from which the revenues are mainly derived.

Free trade, would require that all such tax or duty should be removed, and free importation allowed.

A high or prohibitory tariff creates a monopoly. A low tariff, tends to free trade; and oppresses labor, by encouraging the use and consumption of the products of cheap labor of other countries; and therefore injures home production. It also means direct taxation for the revenues of the government.

In view of the fact, officially stated, that "nine-tenths of all the personal property of the country escapes taxation," it is not reasonable to suppose, that farmers and real estate owners, favor a policy which would impose upon them the chief burden of supporting the government, and paying the national debt.

What the farmers demand, and the country needs, is a tariff so adjusted as to protect all interests equally, and give employment to both capital and labor. Hence the present tariff laws should be so amended as to give the same protection to the raw material, as is given to the manufactured article. The welfare of our country

and the perpetuity of our republican institutions, depend upon the general prosperity and contentment of the people; and when a policy shall be inaugurated, that will so stimulate the productive industries of the country, as to give employment to labor at reasonable wages, and capital at fair profits, bringing capital and labor, "the producer and the consumer into the closest and most intimate relations," we shall again see prosperity reign throughout the land, and the government made strong, not only among the nations of the earth, but in the affections and confidence of the people.

EDUCATION.

My views in relation to common schools, and a higher education for farmers' sons and daughters, were fully expressed in my communication to the last State Grange, to which I call your attention, together with the able reports of our late worthy and lamented brother, R. A. Ingersoll, chairman of the committee on education.

I am fully convinced that one of the greatest monopolies, which now exists in our State, has full control over the price of the text books, which are used in our public schools. At least, the prices which are paid for such books would seem to indicate this. There is no good reason why our schools should not be furnished with books direct from the publishers, and at first cost. This subject will bear investigation, and such means of reform adopted, as the interests of education demand.

In no direction is the good work of the Grange, and the influence of the Order more perceptible, than in the growing intelligence of farmers in relation to general business, the laws of trade, influences which govern the market, state and condition of the same, the current prices of all commodities bought and sold upon the market, the laws and customs, relating to interest, money, discount, commission, percentage, and exchange; and the application of such knowledge to the operations of the farm.

Greater economy is practiced, less debt contracted, larger profits from the farm realized, and consequently more mortgages discharged.

The Grange is a school in which every question relating to the farm and the household should be discussed, and all information relating to agriculture and the general interest of farmers disseminated.

TRANSPORTATION.

As the position which our Order has taken in regard to rail-roads and corporations engaged in transportation, has been misunderstood or intentionally misrepresented, it seems proper that I should briefly refer to this subject.

The following from our National Platform—the declaration of purposes of our Order—are fundamental principles which underlie the whole organization, and must be taken as authentic: "We wage no aggressive warfare against any other interest whatever. On the contrary, all our acts, and all our efforts, so far as business is concerned are not only for the benefit of the producer and consumer, but also for all other interests, that tend to bring these two parties into speedy and economical contact. Hence we hold that transportation companies of every kind are necessary to our success, and that their interests are intimately connected with our interest, and harmonious action is mutually advantageous. We are not enemies of rail-roads nor of any corporation, that will advance our industrial interests."

Yet every failure in business, the fall of stocks, fluctuations of the mar-

ket the falling off of railroad receipts, in fact, almost every calamity that befalls the community, even to the financial crisis which has paralyzed almost every business interest in the whole country, has been charged to the "Grange." Even the great railroad manager, Wm. Vanderbilt, has been credited with saying that "the recent rail-road strikes among the rail-road employees was attributable to the Grange."

Mr. Vanderbilt's position and reputation as a business man is such as to repel the idea that he would knowingly misrepresent. Hence we must conclude that he too is ignorant of the objects aims, and composition of our organization; and it is proper that I should state, that our members are farmers, who are quiet peaceful law-abiding citizens, and that neither rail-road officers or employees are admitted to membership. The idea of resistance to law, disturbing the peace, or interfering with any legitimate business is directly antagonistic to every principle of our Order. That farmers are not enemies to rail-roads has been demonstrated, by their willingness to tax them selves, and even mortgage their farms to build them. No class of community are more directly interested in the construction of rail-roads, and their successful management than farmers.

Capital invested in rail roads, (genuine stock) should be protected by the legislation of the country, as sacred as any other investment. While our organization is not opposed to capital, or "any corporation that will aid the industrial interests," yet we are opposed to the "tyranny of monopolies," and shall labor with all the influence of our organization, to remove the antagonism between labor and capital, by common consent, and an enlightened statesmanship worthy of the nineteenth century.

The government is clothed with sovereign power held in trust, to be exercised only for the good of the people; and every franchise granted to a corporation, or privilege bestowed upon a particular class, which does not in some way benefit the community, is an act of injustice to the people.

If, for instance, a corporation is created, which shall result in building a railroad or manufacturing establishment, to be operated upon such principles as to benefit the community, then the people receive some return for the privilege granted; but if the franchises are so improvidently showered upon the corporation as to enable it to oppress the people, then no benefit is received, for the franchise granted, but an absolute injury, and the state or nation perpetrating the wrong has violated its most solemn trust. By this rule all acts of legislation, both state and national, should be tried and to this test all theory of political economy should be subjected. "Individual happiness, depends upon general prosperity."

CO-OPERATION.

The business arm of the Order has been greatly strengthened during the past year, and several co operative stores have been established, and so far as I have been able to learn from the reports made to me, they are generally successful, and are proving a great benefit to Patrons.

PLASTER INTERESTS.

I can congratulate the members of the Order, and farmers generally, upon the success which has crowned the efforts of the Executive Committee of the State Grange, to secure for them plaster at reasonable rates. The history of this contest is so well known that I need not repeat it. It is enough to say, that great credit is due to the

members of the Order throughout the State, for their hearty and united co-operation, in sustaining the committee; that all has been accomplished that can be desired, in reducing the price of manufactured plaster at the mill, and it only remains for the farmers to stand by their friends, and purchase their plaster at the Grange mill of Day & Taylor, to reap abundantly of the fruits of their labors, in crushing out the most gigantic monopoly ever organized in the State, against the agricultural interests.

COUNTY AND DISTRICT GRANGES.

Five County and District Granges have been organized during the year, making twenty now in the State. Most of these are in a prosperous condition, and have demonstrated the ability of these organizations to infuse a new life into the Order, and strengthen and build up the Subordinate Granges within their jurisdiction. I am inclined to the opinion, that the initiatory fees should be reduced, and the meetings of the Grange held in different localities, so as to make the County Grange and fifth degree, accessible to every member of the order.

DELINQUENT GRANGES.

A list of delinquent Granges has been published in the VISITOR and corrected monthly. I am investigating the condition of these Granges, and the reports as far as heard from, indicate that a majority of them can be revived and put in working order. Several have already paid their dues to the State Grange, and are holding regular meetings; others have called meetings, and are endeavoring to revive an interest and resume work. There are some, however, that have made no progress since their organization, and their charters must be suspended. It is a singular fact that of the causes given, why Granges have failed and discontinued their meetings, more than fifty per cent attribute it to the presence of members who are not directly interested in farming, and have endeavored to make the Grange subserve their personal interests. It would be wise for the Granges thus afflicted to apply the "pruning knife," and remove the dead branches.

The work of reviving dormant Granges, and strengthening the weak ones, should be commenced at once, and thoroughly prosecuted.

GRANGE VISITOR.

This sheet has been issued monthly from the Secretary's office, during the year. I am confident that its circulation has been productive of much good to the Order, and could be largely increased by a little effort on the part of the officers of Subordinate Granges. As will be seen by the Secretary's Report, it has been a source of revenue to the State Grange. This was never intended or anticipated. I therefore recommend that it be enlarged to a four column sheet, at the beginning of the next volume.

NATIONAL GRANGE.

The eleventh Annual Session of the National Grange was held in Cincinnati, Ohio, commencing on the 21st of November and closing on the 29th. The session was an unusually interesting one, and in every respect harmonious. A large amount of business was transacted and some important measures inaugurated. The following amendments to the constitution were recommended, and submitted for ratification. I herewith submit the same for your careful consideration:

"FEES FOR MEMBERSHIP.

"Amend Article VI.—The minimum fee for membership in a Subordinate Grange shall be: for men, three dollars, and for women, one dollar for the four degrees."

"REPRESENTATION.

"Amend Preamble under the head of "Organization"—"National Grange," by adding the following at the close of the 1st paragraph under said head:

"Each State shall be entitled to two votes in the National Grange, and an additional vote for every ten thousand paying members in excess of ten thousand."

FINANCE.

For the present sound condition of the treasury, and the wise and judicious management of the finances of the State Grange, great credit is due to your able Executive Committee. Their sessions have been perfectly harmonious, notwithstanding that differences of opinion often existed on important measures; yet their wise conclusions, and self-sacrificing devotion to the interests of the Order, justly entitle them to the gratitude and confidence of the entire membership in this State. For statement of receipts and expenditures, and present condition of the treasury, I refer you to the reports of the Treasurer and Executive Committee.

BUSINESS AGENCY.

I have been unable to obtain anything official, relating to the business of the State Agent, and must refer you to other reports for the desired information. That the Agency has been beneficial to the Order cannot be doubted; but I am yet of the opinion that it should be made self-sustaining.

This, together with other important matters, to which I have not time to refer, are submitted for your consideration, confidently believing that all your deliberations will be harmonious, your conclusions wise, and thereby the bond of our Fraternal Brotherhood strengthened.

J. J. WOODMAN.

SINCE the last issue of the VISITOR, the annual sessions of both the National and State Granges have been held.—Both sessions have been unusually interesting; and the work done cannot fail to prove beneficial to the Order. But few amendments to the Constitution were petitioned for, which seems to indicate that the members of the Order are satisfied with the wholesome amendments which have been made; and that hereafter the National Grange will not be compelled to devote so much time to "constitutional tinkering," as it has done in the past. This will give more time to consider subjects relating more directly to the vital interests of the Order. The degrees have been opened to all members of the Order, and all "Fourth Degree" members made eligible to any office, from the "Gate Keeper" of a Subordinate, to the Master of the National Grange. Two amendments to the Constitution have been submitted, one relating to a more equal representation of large States in the National Grange, and the other, reducing the "minimum of initiatory fees" to \$3 for men and \$1 for women for the four degrees. These amendments will become a part of the Constitution when ratified by three-fourths of the State Granges; but not until so ratified and proclaimed by the Master of the National Grange, can a Subordinate Grange reduce the initiatory fees without violating the Constitution.

ANNUAL WORD.

The annual word has been communicated to all the Masters of Subordinate Granges who attended the State Grange as delegates, and they were instructed to communicate it to the Masters of all the Granges which they represented in the State Grange; also to the Masters of such other Granges as may be entitled to receive it. The new annual word is for the ensuing year, and Masters of Subordinate Granges are instructed to impart it to all members of their respective Granges, that are in good standing, and whose dues are paid up to the first day of January, 1878.

COUNTY AND DISTRICT GRANGES.

The State Grange has amended the Rules for the Organization and Government of County and District Granges, so as to reduce the "Minimum of initiatory fees" to \$1 for men and 50 cents for women

Protection to Wool Growers.

I have received a letter from a member of Congress from this State, informing me that a bill has been introduced into Congress to repeal the tariff upon wool; and that it is feared that it will pass, unless the farmers send in their protests against it. I recommend that every Subordinate Grange in the State take immediate action upon this question, and obtain the name of every farmer within its jurisdiction to a remonstrance against the passage of the bill, and forward the same to their member in Congress.

I have prepared the following form of petition, which can be used for this purpose, with such alterations as may be deemed necessary:

To Michigan Senators and Representatives in Congress:

We the undersigned farmers and wool growers of Michigan, learning that a bill is now pending before Congress to repeal, or reduce the duties on foreign wool, imported into the United States; and believing that such action would be not only detrimental to the best interest of the Country, but ruinous to the wool growing interests of this State, and the great north-west; desire to call your attention to the following, among the many reasons why the bill should not pass.

1st. Agriculture is the leading pursuit of the people of the United States, and nearly one-half of the entire population are engaged in this branch of productive industry, hence the soil is the great source of wealth, and upon its fertility and productiveness depends the prosperity of the people, and the wealth of the nation. Wisdom and sound political economy would therefore seem to require, that legislation should be so directed as not only to encourage every branch of agriculture, but as far as possible, prevent the rapid exhaustion of the soil by the production of cereals, so evident in most of the grain growing States.

2d. Wool growing is one of the leading branches of agriculture, and flocks the greatest renovators of the soil; yet wool cannot be produced in this country as cheaply, as in warmer climates, with perennial pastures. The price of wool in this country, has ever been governed by the tariff, and must continue to be, until flocks have been so improved and increased, as to produce more than is required for home consumption, then the law of supply and demand will regulate the price; but without protection, wool growing in the northern States must be abandoned.

3rd. The reduction of the tariff in 1872, had the effect to increase the importation of foreign wool, from about 50,000,000 pounds annually, to upwards of 122,000,000 pounds in 1872, and 85,000,000 pounds in 1873; (exclusive of shoddy). This shoddy and coarse wool, was mixed together, and manufactured into a substance called cloth, and thrown upon the market in such quantities, as to reduce the price of domestic wool, below the actual cost of production, and literally ruin every manufacturer of honest woolen goods in this State, if not throughout the whole country.

4th. The tariff was restored in 1874, and recently a slight advance has taken place in the price of domestic wool.—This, together with the belief, that the present tariff will not be removed; and that the policy of the government will hereafter be, to so encourage the productive industries of the country, as to give employment to both labor and capital, and enable the people to produce not only their own wool, but their clothing, has encouraged farmers to again turn their attention to their flocks.

We therefore, in justice, fairness, and equity, ask you to use all honorable means, to prevent any reduction in the duties on foreign wool; and in all Tariff Legislation, to use your influence to secure the same protection to the raw material, as is given to the manufactured article; and your petitioners will ever pray.

THE business arm of the Order is rapidly gaining strength all over the country. The members take hold of co-operation promptly when its principles and practical workings are explained to them. The system perfected by the National Grange will soon be generally adopted.—*Patrons of Husbandry.*

THE GRANGE VISITOR.

SCHOOLCRAFT, JAN. 1, 1877.

Secretary's Department.

J. T. COBB, - - - SCHOOLCRAFT.

Officers and members of Subordinate Granges in corresponding with this office, will please always give the *Number* of their Grange.

BLANKS.

Blanks that are sent free from this office on application are:

Blank Quarterly Reports of Secretaries of Subordinate Granges.
Blank Quarterly Reports of Secretaries of Pomona Granges.
Blank application for organizing Pomona Granges.
Blank applications for Membership in Pomona Granges.
Blank Bonds of Secretary and Treasurer.
Blank Election Reports of Sub. Granges.
Blank Certificates of Election to County Convention.
Blank Certificates of Representatives elected to the State Grange.
Blanks for Consolidation of Granges.
Blank Application for Certificate of Dimit.
Blank Plaster Orders.
Blank Certificate of Incorporation.

Secretary's Annual Report.**Worthy Master and Patrons:**

With the return of another session of the State Grange usage demands that I submit a Report of the business transacted in the Secretary's office during the fiscal year 1877.

While the business of the supply Department has fallen off very materially, the correspondence of the office has not diminished, this with the increased circulation of the VISITOR, the plaster and miscellaneous work has demanded and received my undivided attention.

As set forth in the Report of the Ex. Committee, the profits on supplies sold add but a trifle to the resources of the State Grange.

As the Ex. Committee have collected all the facts as to the receipts and disbursements of the Secretary's office and incorporated the same in their Report, it is quite unnecessary for me to go over the same ground.

In the matter of collections and settlement of balances, my accounts with Subordinate Granges are in a better condition—more uniformly balanced up to the date of their last Report—than they have been at the close of any previous fiscal year. I have given this matter particular attention, and by direction of the Ex. Committee have remitted dues of long standing where the membership of a Grange had largely fallen off, leaving a burden upon a faithful few who were not responsible for the return of membership dues to the State Secretary on non-paying members.

In all cases of this kind the "Good of the Order" seemed to demand this remission of dues and as the "Good of the Order" is the vital principle by which under constitutional restrictions our official acts should be directed and controlled, I think no one will take exception to the course adopted.

I have received official notice of the organization of five Subordinate Granges during the year. Two in the County of Wexford, by special Dep. H. A. Danville, one by special Dep. W. O. Smith in the County of Osceola, and two by Gen. Dep. C. L. Whitney, one in Washtenaw, and the other in Oceana County. These new Granges have all paid their dues to the State Grange with commendable promptness.

A review of the accounts of the Subordinate Granges as appears on my Books, shows that of the 634 Granges that have been organized in Mich., at the close of the fiscal year,

Nov. 30th, 1877, Reports had been received from 288 in full, 119 were delinquent in Reports for one quarter, 41 for two quarters, 35 for three quarters, 23 for four quarters. 105 have either surrendered their Charters, or are in a dormant condition, and the remaining 23 have been consolidated with neighboring Granges.

We may reasonably expect that nearly all those delinquent for one and two quarters will sooner or later make Reports. Of the rest the larger part are not likely to return to an active existence. Quite a number of those that appear as do want really never had an existence beyond the date of their organization, and should never have been organized.

We cannot safely count on more than two-thirds of our total number of Granges entering upon the new year with a determination to live, and we have a little less than that proportion of our maximum membership as reported to the Nat Grange for the quarter ending Sept. 30th, 1875

It is not my province to enter upon the discussion of the causes of this decline in membership. Primarily it lies in the want of appreciation by the men and women of the country of the advantages in many ways of association and concerted action.

These figures and conclusions at first glance may awaken apprehension in the minds of some of the stability and permanence of the Order, But when we consider the rapid and I had almost said unnatural growth of the Order, not only in this State but throughout the Union, the absorbing into the body of a large amount of material that has never for a moment understood and comprehended the object and scope of the organization, this loss of members is not remarkable or in any way disheartening to its friends and supporters. Many who have turned their backs upon this institution joined only with the expectation of pecuniary advantage, and would have remained faithful if their expectations of profit, or pecuniary advantage had been realized. Many of these were good men and women, and might have been better, if they had not forsaken the Order, for to those who desire improvement, no school or society has ever furnished to the farmer such valuable opportunities.

Though our Organization was not primarily designed by its founders to embrace commercial and pecuniary benefits to the farmer, yet where co-operative or business enterprises have been in the hands of the right men who by their qualifications have made the business a success, it has proved a wonderful bond of strength, union and growth to the Order.

In proof of this, we cite the condition of the Order in the County of Allegan. My Report to the National Grange for the quarter ending Sept. 30, 1875, gave a larger membership than that of any other quarter since the introduction of the Order into this State. The 17 Granges of Allegan County for that quarter reported a membership of 1100. The membership of two of these Granges should not be counted in this comparison as one was practically dead at the time, never having reported since, and another was then in a dying condition.

Yet with a loss of 77 members by these two dead Granges the remaining 15, report for the quarter ending Sept. 30th, 1877, 1181 members. These significant figures present Allegan County to the Order as the banner County of the State, and for this high honor she is indebted to a member of this body Bro. Albert Stegeman, the Worthy Master of Allegan Central Grange, by whose business experience, untiring industry, and zealous devotion to the

principles of our Order, thousands of dollars have been saved to the Patrons of the County.

While I do not believe that the Order of Patrons of Husbandry with its social and educational blessings is in any danger of decay and death. I do see in every successful business enterprise carried on by *Patrons, for Patrons*, evidence of the most convincing kind to a large proportion of our people that the Business arm of the Order not only adds to our material prosperity, but gives us strength in numbers and influence. Unsuccessful enterprises undertaken by those who have more faith than experience, and more zeal than discretion, have in many places weakened or for a time destroyed the Order. We should, therefore, "make haste slowly," that our growth may be more reliable and enduring.

PLASTER.

It will be remembered that your Secretary, by direction of the Executive Committee, sent to the several Granges of the State in September, 1876, blank orders for plaster in the nature of a contract with Messrs. Day & Taylor, of Grandville by which the parties ordering agreed to pay \$3.00 per ton on board of cars at the mill of Day & Taylor, and those orders, when signed, were to be returned to me, and Day & Taylor were to forward plaster on all orders under seal in accordance with directions accompanying the order.

The plan adopted was carried out and the measure of success attending it can be best determined by a statement of results.

The first order of the season was received Sept. 18, 1876, and the last, June 14, 1877. The total number of orders was 438, and the shipments on these orders amounted to 5,891 tons. The amount sold and delivered to Patrons and others at the mill, and shipped by Day & Taylor on orders sent to them direct, is not included in this statement, but when added made their total sales over 7,000 tons. By the arrangement, I was to make collections for all plaster delivered on these orders, and apply 25 per cent of such collections to the payment of an advance made by the Executive Committee to H. O. Weston, for which Messrs. Day & Taylor had become liable to the Executive Committee. The amount unpaid at the last session of the State Grange was \$3,310.17. In due time, from collections that sum was paid, and the members of the Executive Committee relieved of a personal liability that they had assumed in behalf of the Order and carried for two years.

The aggregate value at the mill of the plaster shipped on orders forwarded by me, was over \$17,500, which with collections for bags and barrels made up in bills, few of which exceeded \$30, a total of over \$18,000. I take great pleasure in bearing witness to the promptness with which these bills were nearly all met. There remains but eight accounts which are wholly or in part unpaid, amounting in all to \$195.00.

Very little if any of this will be lost. I venture to say to the credit of the Order that so large an amount of money covering such a large number of bills, was never before collected in the State of Michigan as so small cost.

In behalf of brothers Day & Taylor, it affords me pleasure to say that in our business relations I have in every instance found them not only honorable but liberal in the treatment of every case of complaint that was made to me. Shipments from the mill of Day & Taylor commenced much earlier in the season than from any of the other mills in the Grand River Valley