



GOUGING THE FARMER; SOAKING THE CONSUMER

(Written Especially for The Bulletin.)
One can hardly pick up a newspaper from any part of the country these days without finding fresh evidence of the utter failure of the food transporting and distributing machinery. Papers from east, from west, from south all add their items of confirmation.

Michigan papers tell of an apple grower near Frankfort, that state, who shipped forty-seven bushels in Duchess apples across Lake Michigan to a Wisconsin commission man. After the latter had deducted freight and brokerage and other charges, he mailed the apple grower a check for three cents.

Another farmer sent over fifty bushels. He got a check for five cents.

A third hadn't even so good luck as this. He despatched a large consignment and, after due lapse of time, received a bill for eighteen cents to cover deficit in freight and broker's charges.

Pears, plums and peaches are in about the same boat. Picked, sorted and delivered at the Frankfort docks, fruit of all these kinds brings only from thirty to forty cents a bushel basket. The baskets in small quantities, cost twenty-five cents apiece this year.

Farmers are giving their fruit away to anyone who will come and pick it. In that one Michigan county alone, experienced growers estimate that ten thousand bushels of apples, pears, plums and peaches are rotting on the ground, because it costs the growers less to let them rot than to pick and market them.

And this with peaches of inferior grade retailing in the Chicago markets, just across the lake, for an average of \$3.75 a basket. Wholesale freight between the Michigan orchards and the Chicago fruit stores all the way, too.

In the big Missouri fruit belt fancy Dark peaches are waiting by the carload because the orchardists can't get ten cents a bushel for them. Only a few miles away, in St. Louis, they are selling for \$2.50 a bushel.

A Georgia watermelon grower shipped a load of monsters to New York city last month. Two thousand of them, all of the size which would retail in that city for a dollar apiece. He got \$20 for the two thousand—one cent apiece.

In the western New York fruit country more carloads of noble peaches are being allowed to fall to the ground and rot because the farmers can't get only thirty cents a bushel at the best and can't sell a quarter of their crops for even that. Yet in Albany, two hundred miles away by direct railroad route, the dealers are demanding \$3 a bushel for these same peaches.

The Chicago Journal commenting on the reports it has received, says of the situation there:

"Apples, pears, peaches, plums are all selling in wholesale carload lots at figures which pay the grower the scantiest profit. If he picks, crates and ships the output himself, he returns from the commission and transportation companies as likely to show a loss as a profit. . . . When apples, for instance, net the Michigan grower five cents a bushel at the orchard, and a few days later well in Chicago's retail stores at a rate equivalent to 15 a bushel there is something obviously wrong in distribution methods. . . . Transportation facilities are ample. The handlers of foodstuffs, fruits included, rigorously deny any plot to rob consumers. But the fact remains that the growers get about one-tenth what Chicago's consumers pay."

"Who gets the rest?"

A Kansas paper remarks that, with freight rates too high and prices too low to pay for picking, packing and sorting it, "more than half of this country's great fruit crop is rotting where it grew. The loss runs far into the millions. It is a tragedy."

Some years ago an eastern farm paper was furiously assailed by the city organs of "big business" because it asserted that the farmer averaged no more than thirty-five cents on the dollar the consumer paid. This assertion was bitterly denounced as a libel on the business man who hood the producer and the consumer. It was equivalent to calling them hogs or thieves, their advocates shrieked.

In this fruit matter it now clearly appears that the farmer gets only from one cent to ten cents of the dollar the consumer pays. "Who gets the rest?" asks one critic. "It is a tragedy," declares another.

Well that shows some gain. Instead of cooperating the man who tells the truth as a liar and the liar at least two new papers are now themselves pointedly setting forth the truth and calling for an explanation. It might well be wished that they would get it, but they won't. They won't for the simple reason that the only explanation would involve a confession and a plea of guilty.

Really when you get down to brass tacks it is a city problem. Its solution should be laid on the cities and their consumers, rather than on the farmer. For, while the farmer is indeed being deprived of a fair price for his goods, the

city consumer is being soaked with utterly disproportionate and unfair charges for the same goods. Only a very few farmers, living as one might say in city back-yards, can peddle their fruits or other products direct to consumers. The fruit grower with a hundred acre peach orchard a hundred miles from city markets, can't take his fruit, a few baskets at a time, to that city and sell them from door to door. Even with the speediest of speed wagons, it would take him all the time just to go and come. And he must have some little time to pick and basket the fruit. Also, he must be around the barns at least twice a day to milk the cows and feed the pigs. He can't hire anybody to milk cows or feed pigs or pick fruit, these times, for all the cows and the pigs and the fruit will bring in.

And so he has to sell in quantity and at the orchard or not at all.

Near can the average city consumer afford to take a day off and drive a hundred miles and back to pick up a couple of baskets of cheap peaches. That takes too many stillings for the pick. But that city consumer could combine with ninety-nine other neighboring consumers to send a special truck that hundred miles, buy up two hundred baskets and deliver them at mere cost of peaches, each at some profit. It would cause some to all the shippers in its benefits, and a good deal to the two or three leaders who would have to make the arrangements. That brings the whole matter to its head. Are city consumers really ready to meet farm producers half way in inaugurating a direct farm-to-kitchen trade? Are they disposed to take the necessary trouble and do the necessary work?

Of course, such a proceeding would take some trouble. It would cause some to all the shippers in its benefits, and a good deal to the two or three leaders who would have to make the arrangements. That brings the whole matter to its head. Are city consumers really ready to meet farm producers half way in inaugurating a direct farm-to-kitchen trade? Are they disposed to take the necessary trouble and do the necessary work?

Thus far small signs of such readiness are apparent. The farmer keeps the air of his fields and orchards blue with denunciations of the speculative buyers who won't offer him quarter value for his crops, and the city consumer turns black in the face over the extortions of dealers who charge him double price for the same crops.

For all of which neither one is to be blamed too severely. It's hard to be hurt without yelling. That's human nature. But why not take some pains and give a little thought to avoiding the hurt?

In comparatively small cities, where the farms lie right against the city limits, the situation isn't so bad as in large cities with far flung fringes of parked and law-clipped suburbs. Likewise, on farms which are not so serious as on those at a great distance and beyond the possibility of personal delivery. But it's bad enough anywhere and everywhere.

I can't for the life of me see why labor unions with their close organization and machinery for concerted action, don't more widely follow the example of those in Toledo and Chicago and some other western cities and use their facilities for saving money to their members by buying for them in wholesale quantities. They assume to act for the welfare of the wage earners composing them. Any reduction effected in the cost of foods would certainly make for much welfare. Isn't a dollar saved just as big as a dollar earned? Really, wouldn't it be wiser to conserve wages by constructive economies than to attempt to increase them by destructive strikes?

There's nothing new in the fruit wasting reports of this present fall. The same thing happened last fall, and has been going on for years in greater or less degree. It will continue next year and the year after and so on till the consumers get ready to take the bits in their teeth and defy their would-be drivers, the profiteers.

Bawling and boo-hoing won't get us any where, though we howl as loudly as all the bulls of Bashan.

In the former days when apples were worth saving, the old farmer found that tossing twigs and sods at the boys in his Pumpkin tree didn't bring them down. So he tried a few stones.

THE FARMER.

EAST KILLINGLY

Mr. and Mrs. William Robbins and daughter Eleanor of Waterbury spent the week end with Mrs. I. P. Chase. Mrs. Thebe Potter returned to Waterbury with them.

Mrs. I. P. Chase and daughter Nellie visited in Danleison and Putnam Sunday. J. F. Seaman of Brooklyn, N. Y. is visiting here.

Rev. J. W. Carpenter was in Putnam Monday. Mrs. Ethelyn Gove and Grace E. Hill were in Putnam Sunday. Many from out of town were here Saturday and Sunday to view the flower show.

The annual flower show proved the



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usual success. The display of blossoms was large and beautiful. Probably Cyrus Smith and Mrs. William Pray had the largest collections, with Deacon Luther Smith and Walter L. Bartlett close seconds while Mrs. Danleison's display was exquisite as usual. In fact, all the flowers and vegetables deserved a blue ribbon. All were effectively arranged. A. M. Paine had a large and varied assortment of vegetables and fruit. It showed what fruit can be grown in New England. Elmer Wood had a large display different from that of the ordinary gardener. The vegetables were just as fine in their class as the flowers in theirs.

WEST KINGSTON

Mrs. W. B. Wilcox of Norwich Town, who had been visiting relatives here the past week, returned home Sunday. Mrs. Annie K. Webster and daughter called on friends at East Greenwich Sunday.

Richard H. Bristow and family visited Wyoming relatives Sunday. Mrs. Joseph Hatheway of East Greenwich spent last week with Mrs. Flora Bristow.

School began Monday after a vacation last week. Mrs. Annie Weeden and daughter, Miss Jessie, have returned to their home at

Wickford after a few weeks' visit with Mrs. Carroll Arnold and family. Frank Bills and family of Blackstone, Mass., visited relatives here recently. Mrs. Lord and her father, Mr. Lareck, of Providence, called on friends here Thursday afternoon. Mr. Lareck is in very poor health.

Greenwich.—Mr. and Mrs. William M. Van Deren of Lexington, Ky., have announced the engagement of their daughter, Miss Mary D. Van Deren, to James Bucklew Holme, son of Mr. and Mrs. George A. Holme of New York and Greenwich.



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WITHIN slightly more than a yard in length, the Victory Crawford gives you three ovens, the Crawford Adjustable Broiler, the full advantages of coal or wood cooking, the quick response of gas, eight places on the cooking top on which you can prepare eight different dishes if the emergency demands—and in spite of all it offers it is amazingly simple. In grey enamel all you need do to clean it is to run a damp cloth over the beautiful surface. It's made in black, if you prefer. Whatever the size of your family, it will cook better and last longer than the utmost demands of your investment—and the investment is surprisingly low.

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Hourigan Bros.

WHY SOLEMN TIME?

Why be melancholy at the fallin' o' the leaves,
Why sit weepin', wailin' jest because the cool wind grieves?
Fall time needn't be a time to pull a face that's long,
An' the Bob White's clear cut whistle needn't be a funeral song.
The old time poets seemed to think when Summer passed away,
An' Autumn came a trippin' in 'twas wrong to laugh an' play,
They called it melancholy days an' sang a doleful strain,
At the first leaf that drifted down an' fluttered 'long the lane.
No, fall time is a happy time—with promise everywhere,
An' business starts a pickin' up; you're goin' ter get your share.
The happy kids romp off to school, the Injun Summer's bright,
An' it's a time to kick your heels an' say the world's all right.
—Phil. H. Armstrong in Florida Times-Union.

THE PORTEOUS & MITCHELL CO.

IT WILL BEGIN TODAY
An 8-Day Sale

In Our Basement Department
China, Glassware, Housewares

The savings offered are actual savings from our regular prices and are of timely importance to all housewives, within trading distance of this store.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE SPECIAL OFFERINGS READY WHEN THE STORE OPENS THIS MORNING

Chinaware At Special Prices

- 50% Off:** An assortment of Chinaware, comprising Roll Trays, Salads, Olives, etc.—all at one-half marked prices. Some great bargains in this lot.
- 20% Off:** All Fancy China, including several new assortments of Salad Sets as well as odd pieces, Tea and Cake Sets—all at 20 per cent. off marked prices.
- 10% Off:** During this Eight-day Sale, we will give a ten per cent. discount on all open stock patterns, that are not specially priced.

Hand Painted Tea Sets, \$3.16

Tea Sets, consisting of 17 pieces of hand painted Nippon China—Very special price \$3.16 a set.

- DINNER SETS, AT \$19.50**
American Porcelain, 100-piece, decorated Dinner Sets, with flowered borders, choice of two designs—Special price \$19.50 a set.
- DINNER SETS, AT \$29.75**
100-piece American Porcelain Dinner Sets, in Pheasant and Conventional designs—Special prices \$29.75 to \$39.50 a set.
- CUPS, AT 5c**
China Gusterd Cups, with blue decorations—Special price 5c each.
- Cups and Saucers, 29c**
China Cups and Saucers, heavy gold band on clear white china—Special price 29c.

Glassware At Special Prices

- 50% Off:** A collection of Bojdir and Table Lamps, a variety of styles and sizes—all at one-half marked prices.
- 15% Off:** All our light Cut Glassware, Tumblers and Stoneware, a big variety to select from—all at 15 per cent. off marked prices.

- TUMBLERS, AT 5c**
Etched Tumblers, conventional outlining—these are very special value at 5c each.
- SHERBETS, AT 23c**
Rolled edge Sherbets in colors something new—Special price 23c each.

Housewares At Special Prices

- 20% Off:** Auto Vacuum Ice Cream Freezers, in 1, 2 and 4-quart sizes—this well known standard make Ice Cream Freezers at 20 per cent. off marked prices.

- Welcome Soap, good old-fashioned soap, at old-fashioned prices, 10 bars for 49c
- Single-faced Wash Boards—Special price 34c
- Whitelocks Clothes Lines, 50 feet of Manila, water-proof line—Special price 37c
- Large size Clothes Baskets—Special price \$1.33
- Willow Hampers, square and round—Special price \$1.93
- Wash Boilers, heavy tin with copper bottom—Special price \$1.96
- Electric Flat Irons, guaranteed—Special price \$4.44
- No. 6 Brooms—a limited quantity—Special price 57c
- Flour Sifters, regular value 25c—Special price 17c
- Wax Paper, 80 sheet rolls—Special price, 5 for 25c
- Glass Shelves in four sizes—18, 20, 22 and 24-inch—Prices are 94c to \$1.43, according to size.
- Alarm Clocks, dependable in every way—Special price 99c
- Flash, hidden bell, Alarm Clocks—Special price \$1.23
- A real Medicine Cabinet, finished in white enamel—Special price \$1.99
- Bath Room Cabinet, white enamel finish, made with two shelves—Special price \$3.17
- Glass Bowls, sizes 5 to 9 inches, 5 sizes—Special price a set of five 99c
- Five-piece Mixing Bowl Sets—Special price a set \$1.16
- Stone Crocks (covers extra)—Special price a gallon 79c
- Blue Enamel Round Roasters, medium size—Special price \$2.70
- Aluminum Omelette Pans—Special price 97c
- Aluminum Preserving Kettles, 3-quart size—Special price \$1.49
- 7-quart Cold Pack Round Canners—Special price \$2.63
- Atlantic Col Pac Canners, 6-quart size—Special price \$3.27
- Atlantic Col Pac Canners, 12-quart size—Special price \$4.33
- Mirro, 2-quart Percolators, regular value \$2.20—Special price \$1.49
- FREE—with each Liquid Veneer Mop, we will give a bottle of Liquid Veneer Polish—Price of Mop \$1.00

THE PORTEOUS & MITCHELL CO.