to rest on positive knowledge gained by investigation rather than on solicitation and influence. Politics, even government, may be partisan; legislation, existing for the public good, should be unpartisan. It should be deliberate. We should know before we legislate. There should be a given body of men and women, designated in an organization, to which one may go for facts and reasons, and for advice founded on facts rather than on sky-blue opinion.

The Association can be of little service unless it knows what is needed in the way of agricultural legislation. It must be ready to act on these needs.

Therefore, we should have an educational agency of guidance, which shall encourage the study of problems affecting agriculture and rural life that are capable of remedy and improvement by means of legislation. It should stimulate an enquiring mind on the part of farmers. It should cooperate with all other agencies interested in rural welfare and duplicate none, granting to every other group or class its right to express itself as it will. It should be non-official and non-bureaucratic. Of course it should recognize and aid the work of governmental agencies that originate legislation, remembering that such agencies are often handicapped in interpreting results of investigations in terms of public policies. It will be broader than the field of economics, and therefore ought not to contest with the several organizations now before the public: it will deal with education, social questions, governmental functions, police control, public health and sanitation, transferrence of the world’s foodstuffs, and the general welfare as it is expressed in the legal aspects of the rural situation. To start with, the Association is conceived in the broadest public spirit, and it is capable of becoming a recognized clearing-house on agricultural legislation.

WHAT IT IS NOT

Having stated the main affirmative basis of the American Association for Agricultural Legislation, we may put some of the other positive facts in negative form. Thereby may we contradict some of the misconceptions and allay the fears of certain of our friends.

I wish at once to state that the Association is not a class organization. Agricultural legislation is its subject, but the welfare of the whole people is its prospect. We wish to encourage, benefit and improve farming and to deepen country life; we want to help the farmer; but we do not want to prosecute these objects against the welfare of the other ranges of the population, or even independently of them.

If we hold that the rural situation is at the bottom of public welfare because it lies against the planet, so must we be ready to accept and to encourage moves that originate with farmers, as with other parts of the population; but we shall accept them because they are needful and good, not because we stand for farmers
as a class against or apart. Can we not commend the statement of E. C. Drury, the chosen leader of the United Farmers of Ontario who have recently overturned the politics of the Province: "Our success, therefore, depends, not on political manoeuvring, but on the breadth and fairness of our policy, and on our adherence to the high ideals of democracy and public service which have made this movement a vital thing in the life of the nation. May we not hope that before long this movement, which has had its birth in one particular class, may expand and broaden till it shall become, not merely a farmers' party, but in a very real sense a people's party!"

I trust that the farmers of the nation will never be combined into one body speaking through what are now called "leaders." It is one of the hopeful signs that the farmers are represented by so many regional and national organizations, each of its own pattern and each standing independently for a set of ideas. By all means we must maintain democracy on this continent. It is a fundamental fallacy now widespread that democracy lies in collective pressures and unit drives to secure what are called "results." As democracy is for individuals, so is individual and unstandardized or at least unconventionalized action at the bottom of it. This Association wants to help, not to dominate.

Second, it follows that this Association is not in politics. Many organizations affirm that they are not in politics because they do not stand for either the Democratic or the Republican party, but they may engage boundlessly in organizational politics which is likely to be the worst kind of politics. The agricultural questions are liable to be made the subjects of partisan politics at any time; it will not be incumbent on the Association, however, to desert these subjects under such circumstances.

Third, the Association is not a lobby. It has no project to "put across." It has no mandate. It is a voluntary coming together of those who foresee grave dangers in hasty and inconsiderate legislation touching agriculture and country life, and who would like to do their part to make the problems and the situations clear. It will be ready to extend its influence actively to the passage of bills here and there that seem to be valid and desirable, but this it can undertake only on occasion.

Fourth, it is not the primary purpose of the Association, as I conceive it, to seek remedies by means of special legislation. It will study such questions as are related to legislation or likely to find expression in enacted law. It will study the effects of laws now in operation; it will seek to enforce laws that are somnolent; it hopes to be ready with advice as situations arise. It will draft bills when it is clear they are needed and when the problem is understood. Perhaps in some fields we need fewer and simpler laws rather than more numerous laws. Repeal of laws is sometimes as needful as enactment of laws. We are not looking for early solutions but for understanding. We are to urge legislation that will stand the test. We remember that laws never enforce themselves.
It is at this point that I have the pleasure of differing with some of my friends and correspondents. They seem to think that the Association exists for the purpose of coming to the aid of many special and local bills before legislatures and desired by organizations and institutions. The Association may indeed be helpful in many such cases, but it cannot assume a partisan attitude.

**THE PROGRAM**

The Association, then, is to be a research or at least an alayzing body, scientific in its approach to the problems and sufficiently detached to allow of impartial view. It is to develop expert advice. It should exercise its influence through careful and proper publicity rather than by propaganda, and be of service to all the organizations that are working for the public good by means of agricultural and rural needs, influencing legislation in state and nation. It should stimulate the unifying and standardizing of laws, and the removal of confusions and contradictions. It should be able to substitute knowledge for personal enthusiasm and partisan compromise.

It should bring together the experience so far gained by agricultural legislation. This has never been accomplished. Such effort means a reference bureau, with copies of all the laws within its field, the published reports, the findings of commissions and public officers, experience of administrators, the pertinent discussions in the press. It should compile statistics. To such a bureau or body any person or organization could apply for information on any particular piece or range of proposed legislation.

It must ingather the practical results of legislation on farming and on the welfare of the farmer. It must go afield, into the open country, for facts and opinions yet uncollected and largely unknown. The effects of legislation must be traced to wheat, cattle, potatoes, milk, alfalfa, wool, cotton, eggs, sugar-beets, fruits, flowers, seeds, woodlots.

It must also trace the products to their destinations on the tables of consumers and in the homes of the people everywhere. Every great agricultural problem is also a city problem. The two parts must be brought together, in a large plan of mutual consideration. There is no agricultural prosperity independently of the welfare of the final consumer.

Likewise must it take council with the commercial men when the subjects deal with distribution and marketing. These men have experience and they have rights. They can make good contributions to the public welfare. The middlemen and distributors add value to goods, so long as they are honest and fair and not too many. We must be careful when we legislate for farmers to legislate also for commerce and for the safeguard of society.

It must undertake original studies and investigations. This means a working association of well-trained persons who are competent in the legal aspects of land occupancy, production, taxation,