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 analyzing 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 enthusiasms 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,
transportation, marketing, cooperation, credits, cold-storage, prices, education, representation, drainage, irrigation, and many other subjects. How many of these studies should be covered by the Association itself and how many of them should be placed in the hands of competent persons outside, is a detail to be worked out. The best qualified persons should undertake the studies.

It must be able to publish the results of these investigations and accumulations. There will be timely reports, briefs for the public, abstracts to be used by societies all over the country, digests for readers, monographs. The first contribution by the Association is a study on the private colonization of land by Dr. Ely. This has been followed by the papers on tenancy by Spillman, Ely, Galpin and Stewart; and later by the suggestive catalogue of rural, social and economic problems by Galpin and Cox. Before long it should undertake the publication of annual reports and a journal. It should keep its members in touch with all projected and pending agricultural legislation.

It must be ready to give advice, by correspondence, by qualified speakers before societies of many kinds, by printed matter, by conference with influential persons at important points. It should be able to express a positive opinion on measures before legislatures and Congress. It should see that rural welfare is properly represented in new constitutions. Where shall legislators go if they seek advice?

It must have a program. Definite subjects are to be under investigation, pursued by orderly processes. It must organize and direct research by many persons and groups, enlisting cooperation. The investigations should be continuous, that they may always be timely and up to date. This program must be known to the public in outline, and to all who desire it in detail.

Of course the program should have certain immediate projects. Undoubtedly the leaders in agriculture will soon be committing themselves to concrete pieces of legislation of far-reaching effect. These commitments may not wait for long theoretical investigation. We must be ready at once for practical results in a very few outstanding subjects. Even now we may make clear analyses of these subjects, letting investigation follow on the doubtful points. With the many alluring suggestions for legislation, there is danger that the Association may dilute its activities by attacking too many things at first, and it may consume so much time in investigation that the laws will be enacted before the studies are completed.

It must have affiliations. Connections should be established with existing agricultural societies, colleges of agriculture, and departments of agriculture. State and local chapters or branches may be organized. The Texas Association for Agricultural Legislation is a good beginning. Relations should be established with educational institutions through departments of economics, farm management, politics, sociologies, history. Courses of study may
be introduced into curricula. It should counsel with the consumers' leagues. The "Study Program," by Alonzo B. Cox, recently issued by the Association, sets forth inviting and promising outlines for institutions and clubs to consider. The Association should bring together all the persons and agencies interested in the legislation phase of rural life, into one working body, associating the leaders in thought and the leaders in action. It should keep watch on legislation.

All this means that the Association must have strong officers, devoted energetic committees, a large membership representing all parts of the country, ample funds, and a well-equipped headquarters. The Association must have a definite organic standing in the public mind, carrying a conservative but constructive influence, and representing agriculture. These things are yet in the making, for the Association is at its beginnings even though it has already made substantial headway; how far they develop and reach depends on the support the public gives; but the possibilities are all within reason and, in truth, are at this moment needed to safeguard and direct the country in times that are formative and critical.

THE SUBJECTS FOR LEGISLATION

The Study Program prepared by Cox presents outlines for ten great groups of studies. These are: food production and prices; land settlement; education, and improvement of country life; marketing; taxation as it relates to agriculture; rural credits; economic studies in highway development; public grazing lands in the West; collective bargaining in agriculture; farm labor problems in the United States. These subjects are represented by committees of the Association. This is indication enough that the field is ample.

Not only is the field ample. In reading my replies from members, I have the feeling that it should be fenced in. It is not easy to see how some of the subjects can be crystallized into enacted law. In many of them, the desired results can be accomplished only by means of education and the organization of rural forces, and these subjects, in such cases, should be left to other agencies. Many of the strictly technical subjects, falling within the realm of natural and physical science, may need to be left to specialists, although even technical laws have their public-policy aspects. My respondents did not exhaust the subjects, and some of the statements are essentially duplicates in different phraseology; but I am tempted to catalogue the subject-matter suggestions in order that you may be impressed with the number, variety and range of the subjects that may be brought to the attention of the Association. Perhaps you will feel, as I do, that the public mind is likely to be miscellaneous in respect to the field of the Association. From this list, however, may be chosen subjects that come within the line of legislative action. Here they are:

Complete census of the land.
Classification of land.