

AGRICULTURAL APPROPRIATION BILL---THE FARMERS' COOPERATIVE
DEMONSTRATION WORK AND THE GENERAL EDUCATION BOARD

S P E E C H

Of

Honorable John H Small

Of North Carolina

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Mr Small. Mr Speaker, I desire to discuss the same amendment which was referred to in the colloquy between the chairman of the committee and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr Byrne). This is Senate amendment No. 41 and affects the appropriation for farmers' cooperative demonstration work. The House bill carried an appropriation of \$378,240, which was increased by the Senate by \$300,000, with a proviso that no part of that sum should be used in connection with any money contributed or tendered by the General Education Board or any like organization.

And, as the chairman said, the conferees agreed to a substitute for the Senate proviso by providing that it may be used with cooperative funds contributed by States, counties, and municipalities, and by public organizations within the State, so that under the amendment as agreed to by the conferees there can be hereafter no contribution to the farmers' cooperative demonstration

work from the General Education Board, because it is not an organization within the State. Now, Mr Speaker, if Congress determines to make the appropriation sufficient to defray the expenses of this farmers' cooperative demonstration work, there can certainly be no objection; but I do wish to refer in a brief way to this work as it has been conducted in the past and the great aid which has been rendered through the General Education Board. This farmers' cooperative demonstration work is the most valuable activity which has ever been organized to help the average farmer, no matter in what section he lives, but particularly in the South, where it had its origin. This work was initiated by Dr Seaman A Knapp, who was put in charge of the work for the eradication of the boll weevil, and out of his efforts for the eradication of the boll weevil came the organization by him of what came to be known as the farmers' cooperative demonstration work. He desired and many of the citizens of the South who had become familiar with its great benefits desired to extend it to all the Southern States, in addition to those which were suffering from the ravages of the boll weevil. At that time Congress declined to make the necessary appropriation, and later Dr Knapp appealed to various sources and finally to the General Education Board, and that Board in 1906 began to make its contributions, and since

that time has contributed as much as \$1,000,000 in annual amounts.

Now, great benefits, as the chairman has well said, have been received by the farmers of the South through this work, and it has been made possible through the donations of this General Education Board. It is not for Congress to impugn the source from which the General Education Board obtained the money nor can we with propriety do so. Congress has for years refused to appropriate for this great work a sufficient sum, and it is to the credit of this Board that it recognized the value of the work and made possible its continuance. The fact is that this money was accepted with the knowledge and approval of the President and of the several Secretaries of Agriculture, all the officials of the Agricultural Department, and of the people of the States of the South, who have enjoyed the benefits of this farmers' cooperative demonstration work. In explanation of this farmers' cooperative demonstration work it may be said that county agents go upon the farm and bring the the knowledge of better farming methods to the farmer himself. There have also been established boys' corn clubs, girls' clubs, girls' canning clubs, and other organizations of boys and girls seeking to familiarize them with the work of the farm and also tending to make rural life more attractive.

Now, in another body and from private sources there have been criticisms of the manner in which this fund has been expended and used. I have had it from the highest authority that at all times this cooperation by the Board had no strings attached. The General Education Board heartily approved of this work and made annual appropriations therefor, but the expenditures were made entirely by the officials of the Department of Agriculture. The Board had nothing to do with the sections or States in which the work was to be done, with the employment of agents or the other officials who were to conduct the work, and it had no connection with any legislation which was enacted from time to time for the enlargement of this work. Nor has there been to my knowledge - and I can speak from knowledge of the conduct of this work in North Carolina - any politics in the prosecution of this farmers' cooperative demonstration work, nor has the General Education Board sought to influence its action in the slightest degree.

Now, Mr Chairman, the citizens of North Carolina - and I believe I bespeak the sentiments of the farmers and all citizens of other Southern States - appreciate and are grateful for these contributions which made possible the establishment and enlargement and prosecution of this farmers' cooperative demonstration work to the

extent to which it has been prosecuted and which has almost brought about a renaissance in agricultural methods.

In every Southern State there has been an increased production of all the staple crops. New and better methods, diversification of crops, better implements, and more comfortable homes have enthused the farmer and rural life has been made more attractive. I have stated before, and it will bear repetition, this class of work has wrought more for the benefit of the average farmer than has ever been before accomplished. Its value has been recognized outside of the South. In the preceding paragraph of this bill is carried an appropriation of \$400,000 for the same character of educational work among the farmers of other sections of the country. It may now be said to have earned universal approval. This is the highest commendation of the farmers' cooperative demonstration work.

Now, I am in favor of Congress appropriating the entire sum necessary to continue this work. Through the generous cooperation of the General Education Board it has passed through its experimental stage and its value has been amply demonstrated. Its critics have been silenced. Congress is simply discharging a duty it should have assumed in the beginning. But as a citizen of one of the States of the South I resent any insinuation that this money heretofore contributed by the Board has been expended in any other than a proper and legitimate

way, and I assert again the great benefits that have accrued to the farmers of the South. Why, Mr Speaker, this contribution by the Board does not represent the entire amount which has been expended in this work. For instance, this work has been instituted in almost every county in North Carolina under a cooperative plan of contribution. The county authorities would contribute, say, from \$300 to \$1,000. The Department of Agriculture would contribute out of this fund from the Board a like amount, and frequently local organizations and individuals would still contribute a like sum.

The whole amount would be controlled and expended by the officials of the farmers' cooperative demonstration work, representing the department, in paying the salary of a county agent, who would conduct this work among the farmers. The selection of this county agent was made by the Agricultural Department.

Mr Speaker, the farmers' cooperative demonstration work was devised and initiated by Dr Seaman A Knapp. He was reared and educated in Iowa, but has resided in the South for about 25 years prior to his death in 1911. He came to know our people and our resources. He also knew our limitations and handicaps. When the boll weevil began its ravages, he was detailed by the Department of Agriculture to study the problem and propose some method of eradication. Among other remedies, he strongly urged

diversification of crops in substitution of the one-crop system of cotton. Through the wisdom of this man it is now conceded that the boll weevil may be controlled in large degree, and that what was regarded as a great calamity was in reality also a blessing.

Out of this work grew the farmers' cooperative demonstration work, which has spread throughout the country. This latter work has also made possible the Lever Law for further agricultural extension work through the State agricultural colleges. Dr Knapp was a pioneer and a builder. He had a constructive mind. Above all, he gave his talents and himself in the service of man. His work will be his most enduring monument.

Now, Mr Speaker, just a word about the cooperative work of the General Education Board in North Carolina. Through the contributions by this Board an organized attack has been made upon the hookworm disease. There was prejudice in my State originally against this organized work and against the source from which the money came. But that has entirely disappeared, and in the hundred counties of North Carolina there have been county appropriations averaging \$250 to the county, in addition to the amount contributed by the General Education Board. And the State of North Carolina has made a general appropriation of \$8,000. In the great campaign which has been

waged for better educational facilities in North Carolina the General Education Board has generously cooperated. Their contributions were made at a most opportune time and have been of very great value to the State.

I wish to say in conclusion that the people of the South having been the beneficiaries of contributions from this Board, which have been wisely expended and with great benefit to the people, it ill becomes Congress or any citizen of the country, and certainly any citizen of the South, to impugn the motives of the donor or to exhibit ingratitude. I distinctly disclaim any such sentiments for the people of my State or of any Southern State. We are neither ingrates nor cowards. (Applause.)