

Declaration of Purposes of the National Grange

Adopted by the St. Louis session of the National Grange, February 11, 1874.

Preamble

Profoundly impressed with the truth that the National Grange of the United States should definitely proclaim to the world its general objects, we hereby unanimously make this Declaration of Purposes of the Patrons of Husbandry.

General Objects

1. United by the strong and faithful tie of Agriculture, we mutually resolve to labor for the good of our Order, our country, and mankind.
2. We heartily endorse the motto: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."

Specific Objects

3. We shall endeavor to advance our cause by laboring to accomplish the following objects:

To develop a better and higher manhood and womanhood among ourselves; to enhance the comforts and attractions of our homes, and strengthen our attachments to our pursuits; to foster mutual understanding and cooperation; to maintain inviolate our laws, and to emulate each other in labor, to hasten the good time coming; to reduce our expenses, both individual and corporate; to buy less and produce more, in order to make our farms self-sustaining; to diversify our crops and crop no more than we can cultivate; to condense the weight of our exports, selling less in the bushel and more on hoof and in fleece, less in lint and more in warp and woof; to systematize our work, and calculate intelligently on probabilities; to discountenance the credit system, the mortgage system, the fashion system, and every other system tending to prodigality and bankruptcy.

We propose meeting together, talking together, working together, buying together, selling together, and, in general, acting together for our mutual protection and advancement, as occasion may require. We shall avoid litigation as much as possible by arbitration in the Grange. We shall constantly strive to secure entire harmony, good will, vital brotherhood among ourselves, and to make our Order perpetual. We shall earnestly endeavor to suppress personal, local, sectional, and national prejudices, all unhealthy rivalry, all selfish ambition. Faithful adherence to these principles will insure our mental, moral, social and material advancement.

Business Relations

4. For our business interests we desire to bring producers and consumers, farmers and manufacturers, into the most direct and friendly relations possible. Hence, we must dispense with a surplus of middlemen, not that we are unfriendly to them, but we do not need them. Their surplus and their exactions diminish our profits.

We wage no aggressive warfare against any other interests 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, that their interests are intimately connected with our interests, and harmonious action is mutually advantageous, keeping in view the first sentence in our declaration of principles of action, that "Individual happiness depends upon general prosperity."

We shall, therefore, advocate for every state the increase in every practicable way, of all facilities for

transporting cheaply to the seaboard, or between home producers and consumers, all the productions of our country. We adopt it as our fixed purpose to "open out the channels in Nature's great arteries, that the lifeblood of commerce may flow freely."

We are not enemies of railroads, navigable and irrigating canals, nor of any corporation that will advance our industrial interests, nor of any laboring classes.

In our noble Order there is communism, no agrarianism.

We are opposed to such spirit and management of any corporation or enterprise as tends to oppress the people and rob them of their just profits. We are not enemies to capital, but we oppose the tyranny of monopolies. We long to see the antagonism between capital and labor removed by common consent, and by an enlightened statesmanship worthy of the nineteenth century. We are opposed to excessive salaries, high rates of interest and exorbitant profits in trade. They greatly increase our burdens and do not bear a proper proportion to the profits of producers. We desire only self-protection and the protection of every true interest of our land, by legitimate transactions, legitimate trade, and legitimate profits.

Education

We shall advance the cause of education among ourselves, and for our children, by all just means within our power. We especially advocate for our agricultural and industrial colleges, that practical agriculture, domestic science, and all the arts which adorn the home, be taught in their courses of study.

The Grange Not Partisan

5. We emphatically and sincerely assert the oft-repeated truth taught in our organic law, that the Grange - National, State or Subordinate - is not a political or party organization. No Grange, if true to its obligation, can discuss partisan or sectarian questions, nor call political conventions, nor nominate candidates, nor even discuss their merits in its meetings.

Yet the principles we teach underlie all true politics, all true statesmanship, and, if properly carried out, will tend to purify the whole political atmosphere of our country. For we seek the greatest good to the greatest number.

We must always bear in mind that no one, by becoming a Patron of Husbandry, gives up that inalienable right and duty which belongs to every American citizen, to take a proper interest in the politics of his country.

On the contrary, it is right for every member to do all in his power legitimately to influence for good the actions of any political party to which he belongs. It is his duty to do all he can to put down bribery, corruption and trickery; to see that none but competent, faithful and honest men, who will unflinchingly stand by our interests, are nominated for all positions of trust; and to have carried out the principle which should always characterize every Patron that

The Office Should Seek the Man, and Not the Man the Office

We acknowledge the broad principle that difference of opinion is no crime, and hold that "progress toward truth is made by differences of opinion," while "the fault lies in bitterness of controversy."

We desire a proper equality, equity, and fairness; protection for the weak; restraint upon the strong; in short, justly distributed burdens and justly distributed power. These are America ideas, the very essence of American independence, and to advocate the contrary is unworthy of the sons and daughters of an American Republic.

We cherish the belief that sectionalism is, and of right should be, dead and buried with the past. Our work is for the present and the future. In our agricultural brotherhood and its purposes, we shall recognize no North, no South, no East, no West.

It is reserved by every Patron, as the right of a free man, to affiliate with any party that will best carry out his principles.

Outside Cooperation

6. Ours being peculiarly a farmers' institution, we cannot admit all to our ranks. Many are excluded by the nature of our organization, not because they are professional men, or artisans, or laborers, but because they have not a sufficient direct interest in tilling the soil, or may have some interest in conflict with our purposes. But we appeal to all good citizens for their cordial cooperation and assistance in our efforts toward reform, that we may eventually remove from our midst the last vestige of tyranny and corruption.

We hail the general desire for fraternal harmony, equitable compromises, and earnest cooperation as an omen of our future success.

Conclusion

7. It shall be an abiding principle with us to relieve any of our oppressed and suffering brotherhood by any means at our command.

Last, but not least, we proclaim it among our purposes to inculcate a proper appreciation of the abilities and sphere of woman, as is indicated by admitting her to membership and position in our Order.

Imploring the continued assistance of our Divine Master to guide us in our work, we here pledge ourselves to faithful and harmonious labor for all future time, to return by our united efforts to the wisdom, justice, fraternity, and political purity of our forefathers.

Preamble to the Constitution of the National Grange

Human happiness is the acme of earthly ambition. Individual happiness depends upon general prosperity.

The prosperity of a nation is in proportion to the value of its production.

The soil is the source from whence we derive all that constitutes wealth; without it we would have no agriculture, no manufactures, no commerce. Of all the material gifts of the Creator, the various productions of the vegetable world are of the first importance. The art of agriculture is the parent and precursor of all arts, and its products the foundation of all wealth.

The productions of the earth are subject to the influence of natural laws, invariable and indisputable; the amount produced will consequently be in proportion to the intelligence of the producer, and success will depend upon his knowledge of the action of these laws, and the proper application of their principles.

Hence, knowledge is the foundation of happiness.

The ultimate object of this organization is for mutual instruction and protection, to lighten labor by diffusing a knowledge of its aims and purposes, to expand the mind by tracing the beautiful laws the Great Creator has established in the Universe, and to enlarge our views of creative wisdom and power.

To those who read aright, history proves that in all ages society is fragmentary, and successful results of general welfare can be secured only by general effort. Unity of action cannot be acquired without discipline, and discipline cannot be enforced without significant organization; hence we have a ceremony of initiation which binds us in mutual fraternity as with a band of iron; but, although its influence is so powerful, its application is as gentle as that of the silken thread that binds a wreath of flowers.