

CORRESPONDENCE.

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Co-operation and the Primary Producer.

(To the Editor "Post" and "Herald.")

Sir.—There has never been a time in the history of the State, that co-operation has been more urgently required than now. During the war years, prices soared like a rocket, it is now the time for the stick to fall. All the indications point to a world slump in the near future, and hard times ahead. The wise man now, is the man who looks ahead, and makes preparations for anything that may come along.

We all know that after the flood comes the ebb. It is a natural law as inexorable as fate. You can blow a bubble larger, and larger, but in the end it will burst. Let us take the case of a farming community. During boom times the farmer is prosperous, land values soar, commission agents, brokers, and speculators increase and multiply. But then comes the crash. The farmer has given no heed to the morrow, and the result is that many go under, who, if they had only looked ahead, would have been enabled to tide over the hard times. Farmers more than anyone else, have urgent need for co-operation. Farming, even under the most favourable conditions, is only a gamble, but with Co-operation, it could be made a gamble with the odds on the farmer. Under the present haphazard system of marketing, whoever wins, the farmer loses. The speculators work for the motto, "heads I win, tails you lose." If they make a mistake in one operation, they

make a mistake in one operation, they make up for it in the next, and in the end the loss is always borne by the primary producer.

The farmer should get the full value of his product, but does he? Emphatically, he does not! The reason is not far to seek. There are two many profits to be made, between the time the produce leaves the growers hands, until it reaches the consumer. There is only one remedy for this, and that is co-operation. Co-operation eliminates the speculator, and reduces the cost of distribution by bulk handling, and by cutting out the middleman.

Co-operation is not easy, the path is strewn with thorns, and the bleached bones of co-operative concerns who have gone under strew the countryside. Internal dissension, and the antagonism of the speculative interests who are all against stabilised prices for farming produce; these have chiefly contributed to the downfall of those enterprises which have gone under. In spite of all this, co-operation must come. Farmers are beginning to wake up and realise the position, that without concerted effort, they will never realise the full value of their labor.

The success of co-operative enterprises like the Byron Bay Butter and Bacon Co. whose turnover runs into millions per annum, and going further afield, the Californian Fruit Growers Exchange, whose turnover in 1919 was over £11,000,000, these examples should encourage the primary producer to be up and doing. Many enterprises have failed through a want of understanding what is required. All marketing associations, should be organised by commodity. That is to say one association handles only one product. This is absolutely essential to obtain the best results. There should be an absolutely binding contract, be-

be an absolutely binding contract, between the producer and the associations. This point cannot be too strongly emphasised; it is there that the rift in the lute generally first occurs. All produce should be handled on a pool basis. "One grade" "one price," should be the slogan, and should be strictly adhered to. The pool system is really the true basis of co-operation, and its fairness is unquestioned. And lastly, any true co-operative concern, should be on a "non profit" basis. It should not be there to make money, it should be there to save money. Its main object is to eliminate speculation, stabilise the markets, and form a distributing agency. Once "Dividends" are made an object, the true spirit of co-operation is lost, and trouble is likely to ensure. The farmers watchword should be, "co-operation," "first, last, and all the time."—Yours, Etc.,

H. HANNUS, Tolga.