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Why Hirth Is Fighting the Pendergast Machine

An Appeal to the Farm Men and Women of Missouri

I apologize for the length of this statement at the outset, but I believe that those who read it will have a more vivid picture of Missouri politics than they have ever had before.

When back in January I announced as a candidate for the Democratic nomination for governor, I did so in the full realization that my only chance to win against the powerful and corrupt Pendergast machine of Kansas City depends upon my getting the overwhelming support of the farm men and women of Missouri irrespective of party, and hence the comment that follows is particularly directed to the farm folks of our State.

I have often been asked how I became so deeply interested in the farmer's problems, and here is the answer: I grew up on a farm in Audrain County, Missouri, and the first money I ever earned was by trapping rabbits during the winter, which I sold to the Hush Hill merchants for a nickel apiece, while when I got to be 14 years old, at threshing time I worked on the strawpile (which was a dreaded job in those days) my Father taking credit for the regular day's work, and permitting me to keep the extra 50¢ per day which strawpile workers received, and thus at threshing time for a number of years the question in my neighborhood was, "Who will go on the strawstack with Bill Hirth?" and often when the thermometer was 100° in the shade, and when the grain was unusually "foggy," I hoped that somebody would let a pitchfork slide into the cylinder, or that the engine belt would break, so that we straw pile workers might get a little breathing spell, and I mention these things only because there isn't a farmer in Missouri who knows the joys and hardships of farm life better than I.

When I was 15 years old I asked to join the local unit of the Farmers Alliance at Rush Hill, and I will never forget how amused the old grizzled members were when I, a mere boy, made this request, and they cheerfully ignored the age provisions of their by-laws to admit me, and almost immediately they made me Lodge Secretary, and two years later, because of a rough and tumble fight in which I routed a group of county politicians who sought to get control of the Alliance in the annual county convention, I was made County

Lecturer, and from that time on the old bearded Alliance leaders never lost an opportunity to push me forward, and when the above facts are considered, is it strange that in the after years I devoted my life to fighting the farmer's battles as best I knew how?

A Struggle for an Education

As I approached 20 years of age I realized the need of a better education, and offered to hire a man in my place on the farm, and my Father reluctantly consenting, I began selling building and loan stock and life insurance in the small central Missouri towns, and with my savings I entered McGee College at College Mound, Missouri, where, in order to husband my meagre funds, and with the aid of a tiny coal oil stove, I batched in an attic, and the next year I entered Central College at Fayette, where again in order to make my scant savings go as far as possible I roomed in an old vacant house, and while finally I didn't have money enough to graduate, I did receive much benefit from the above schooling.

After this, and in order to make some money, I spent several years selling life insurance to the cattle ranchers in Oklahoma and the Indian Territory, and to the contractors and civil engineers who were then building new railroads in the Southwest, and I shall ever prize the experience I received in this work when that section of the Country was still "wild and wooly," and when nearly every man carried a six gun, and many of the cow men and railroad builders became my warm friends, and never lost an opportunity to help me write policies for their friends. All my life I have been blessed with strong friendships, and I am intensely proud of this fact.

When I was 25 years old I married a daughter of Ex-Congressman Vincent of Kansas, and having determined to study law, Mrs. Hirth and I located in Columbia, and here after a year of self instruction I was admitted to the bar, and while several big law firms offered to take me in, even before my admission I concluded that I didn't want to spend my life pleading law cases where human selfishness was dominant on one side or the other, and so I bought the Columbia Statesman which I published for several years, and then I launched The Missouri Farmer. The truth is that the experience I had gotten in the Farmers Alliance tugged at me constantly, and in starting a farm paper I not only

wanted to offer the farmers of Missouri a meritorious publication of this kind, but above all I wanted to use it as the instrument to build a farm organization that would enable me to put into effect here in Missouri the ideas I had formed during my Farmers Alliance days, and in this I think I have succeeded.

Launching the Missouri Farmers' Association

After publishing *The Missouri Farmer* a year or so I exhausted the money I had gotten for the *Columbia Statesman*, and from that time on for several years it was a question whether the paper houses would let me have enough paper to keep "The Farmer" going, and had I not obtained lucrative outside employment it would long since have become a memory. In between getting out the paper I would make speeches to farm audiences here and there, urging them to organize, and in those times when as many as a dozen farmers came out to hear me I was highly pleased, and often after I got through speaking I overheard farmers say, "His ideas are interesting, but he's too young." Finally, however, in 1914 a group of farmers headed by Aaron Bachtel organized the first Farm Club in the Newcomer schoolhouse in Chariton county under by-laws which I had prepared, whereupon I urged these men to help organize the adjoining school districts so I could order a carload of flour and mill feed for them at the wholesale price, and in a week or so they succeeded in doing this, and this first carload saved the farmers who participated in it around \$400, and this "set the woods on fire," and within a month we had over 500 members in Chariton, and simultaneously farmers began to light up the school-houses and organize Farm Clubs in other parts of the State, and in this way, and after several years of struggle that often seemed hopeless, I finally succeeded in launching the Missouri Farmers' Association which today has nearly \$5,000,000 invested in its hundreds of Elevators and Exchanges that reach from Iowa to Arkansas, and which likewise owns and operates some of the largest cooperative processing plants in the U. S., and which does a business of around \$100,000,000 per year, with its own sales offices for poultry and dairy products in Chicago and New York, and thus as during recent times I have contemplated this mighty marketing machine which in the last 20 years has saved the farmers of Missouri many millions of dollars, and which has no equal in any state, I

have not regretted the early heartaches I experienced in its building.

Once the M. F. A. got a real foothold, I often made three and four speeches per day, and frequently the court houses couldn't hold my crowds, and had I not possessed the strength of an ox I would have broken under the strain. During the World War period the profit margins on all merchandise were outrageously high, and thus it was nothing uncommon for our members to save from \$700 to \$1000 on a maximum car of flour and mill feed, and soon in a state-wide sense these savings ran into hundreds of thousands of dollars.

A Mighty Farmers Machine

Our members tiring of unloading from the car door, we began to finance local Elevators and Exchanges, and in practically every case in their price influence these agencies saved their cost during the first year or two, and as time has passed many of them have paid out thousands of dollars in patronage dividends to our members. Along about this time we began to market eggs and poultry, a new field for cooperatives, and often as a new Exchange opened its doors the price of eggs would advance 5¢ per dozen, and poultry in proportion, and that through the years our savings in this activity have run into millions of dollars is true beyond question. Also through my initiative we launched the first farmers livestock shipping association in Missouri, and soon these associations spread out all over the State, and whereas formerly many stock buyers had paid farmers from \$1.00 to \$2.00 per cwt. under the Stock Yards top, through these shipping associations our members received the stock yards price less the handling cost, and that our savings through this activity ran into millions of dollars is likewise true.

To make a long story short, as the years have passed the M. F. A., as it is popularly known, has become the greatest organization of its kind in any state, a fact that has long been conceded by the farm leaders of the Country, and if I never accomplish anything else, I will always take pride in the fact that during the last 20 years I have helped the farmers of Missouri to save scores of millions of dollars, and thus my life has not been wholly in vain, and never has the M. F. A. paid me a dollar in salary, and most of the time I have paid my own expenses. I recall as if it had been but yesterday when 17

years ago on my own hook I rented a little office at the National Stock Yards, and put a sign on it saying that it would be occupied shortly by the Farmers Livestock Commission Company; at first the old line commission men laughed at the "greenhorn farmers," but when some weeks later we started up with a good volume of business they organized a boycott against us, and when things looked darkest I sent a long night telegram to the late President Harding, and explained the situation, and the next day I received a wire from the U. S. Attorney General, saying that he was sending one of his assistants to investigate, and at the end of the public hearing the Government put the old line men in a strait-jacket, and from that time on we had clear sailing, and up to date our firm at the National Yards has returned over a million dollars in earnings to our members. And so on a hot summer's day I bought the old Reed poultry plant in Springfield, Missouri, agreeing to pay \$5,000 of the purchase price within 60 days, and then I went out into the hills to organize Farm Clubs, and to sell stock in the above plant, and happily we were able to meet our contract, and although it had rough sailing for awhile, up to date the Producers Produce Company has earned nearly a million dollars for our members in Southwest Missouri, and covering more than two acres of floor space, and with hundreds of employees, it is the largest plant of its kind in the World, and so I could recount many other instances in which I helped our members to launch new marketing agencies on a shoestring, and which have saved many times their original cost.

A Wonderful Farm Womens Organization

Once the M. F. A. was firmly launched, I induced the wives and daughters of the members to organize an auxiliary which is known as the Womens Progressive Farmers Association which now has over 5000 of the brightest farm women of Missouri enrolled, and which is doing a wonderful work, and in this my purpose was two fold—first, to enable these fine women to help strengthen the M. F. A. and then through their local Clubs to relieve farm life of much of the monotony which has so long weighed heavily upon the average farmer's wife. Soon the above women launched the Junior Farm Clubs which now have several thousand bright farm boys and girls as members, and which is growing rapidly. I regret that I cannot more fully describe the wonderful work these

organizations are doing.

Looking Back a Bit

As the M. F. A. got under full headway, the county agents and the Farm Bureau entered the picture, and sensing the possibility of friction I approached the leaders of the latter and suggested that since the county agents were supposed to assist farmers in production matters, while the M. F. A. was designed to help them save money in buying and selling, that there was no reason why we should not work in harmony, but through bad advice from higher up they rejected my overtures, and thus for several years the friction which I had feared developed, but time has healed most of these foolish differences, and today many erstwhile members of the Farm Bureau belong to the M. F. A., while I believe that all broad minded Bureau members concede that I have fought longer and harder for the farmer than any other so-called farm leader in the Country. When the slogan of "making two blades of grass grow where one has grown before" was launched, I pointed out that we ought to be assured of a fair price for the first blade before we grew the second, and the great struggle to control surplus wheat, cotton, etc., of recent years proved that I was right, and so when I predicted that the ending of the World War would bring with it the greatest collapse to agriculture in the history of the Nation, and advised farmers to pay debts and not to contract new ones, and not to buy farms at inflated prices, again I was right. Recently as the Chairman of a meeting introduced me, he said, "We may not have always agreed with Mr. Hirth, but all of us must admit that he has seldom been wrong in his views of the farmer's problems."

The Famous McNary-Haugen Bill

During the early part of the Harding administration I joined a small group of farm leaders in Washington, and between us we launched the memorable struggle for the McNary- Haugen Bill in Congress; at first, and because I was so busy at home, and had to pay my own expenses, I merely intended to help start this movement, but soon I was bearing the brunt of the battle before the Congressional Committees, and this because

the other farm leaders insisted upon it, and they did this not only because I knew the perilous situation our farmers were in, but because in a rough and tumble fight I have never asked for quarter nor given any, and had it not been for the influence of Herbert Hoover who worked under cover, and who pulled chestnuts out of the fire for the "Industrial East" which feared that higher farm prices would reflect themselves in higher wages to factory employees, we would have induced the late President Coolidge to sign the above bill, and thus we would have saved a million or more farm homes, and have prevented in large part the disaster which the so-called "depression" has brought to our cities. How truly I sensed the impending catastrophe is

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illustrated by the following incident: One forenoon when I had engaged in a bitter exchange with the enemies of the McNary-Haugen Bill in the House Committee on Agriculture, Henry A. Wallace, now Secretary of Agriculture, and I concluded to walk down town to our hotels, and after we had gone some distance in silence, Wallace said, "You know I greatly admire the way you conduct yourself in a pitched battle, but just between us you exaggerate the farmer's plight. Mind you I am not criticizing, but just telling you what I think." To this I replied, "In my opinion I not only don't exaggerate, but for fear that I will make it too strong I actually suppress much of what I really think, and now here it's what I predict—before we see the last of what is coming three-fourths of the banks in your own great state of Iowa will be closed, and tens of thousands of your farmers will lose their homes," whereupon Wallace laughed, and shouted, "You're crazy!" or words to that effect. But several years later when he dropped into my office and told me of the disaster in Iowa, I asked, "Do you remember what I predicted in Washington that day when we walked down town together?" and with a wry look he said, "Yes, I have thought of it many times."

While under the AAA the farmer's position has been greatly improved, in my opinion the farm question will never be fairly or soundly settled until the farmer is assured of "Production cost and a reasonable profit" on those of his products that are consumed in our home markets, and since our Government has for many years conceded a "fair return" to industry, and an "American living standard" to the workers in our cities, is not

the farmer entitled to the same treatment, and conceding that the AAA has helped a lot, have we not still a long ways to go before our farmers will be on the above basis? In my opinion we are far from being "out of the woods," and therefore if I should become governor, and God gives me the life and strength, I intend to do what I can to see to it that a really sound farm plan is adopted in Washington, and needless to say as the governor of a great state I can be much more effective in these premises than as a private citizen. For many years I have contended that the farmer is not only entitled to a square deal from the Government as a matter of common justice, but that unless the farm dollar is given as much purchasing power as any other dollar in the Nation our great Republic is doomed, for unless the millions of the farm can keep our mills and factories going to capacity, what chance is there to get the idle millions of the cities back to work?

Why I Am a Candidate

When on January 5th I announced as a candidate for the Democratic nomination for governor, I did so not because I have a craving for public office, for if I should consult my own wishes I would take things easy from now on, and look after my farm paper and my big livestock farm near Columbia where for many years I have been producing purebred hogs, Shropshire sheep, Jersey cattle and Percheron horses, but in the absence of a better and abler man I decided to do what I could to break up the powerful and corrupt Pendergast machine which today rules Missouri with a ruthlessness that is without precedent in the history of our Country, and this in a great commonwealth which in years gone by has given to the Nation such illustrious men as Thomas Hart Benton, Frank P. Blair, George G. Vest, William Joel Stone, Champ Clark, Mark Twain and Eugene Field, to say nothing of scores of other great men whose place in history is fixed for all time.

Aside from my deep hatred of political bosses, an incident that contributed much to my candidacy was the fact that although I threw myself into the struggle with every ounce of strength I possessed I failed in two regular sessions of the Legislature, and in the extra session in 1933, to obtain the passage of a farm mortgage moratorium bill when a measure of this kind had been adopted in practically every other important farming state, and when the above Legislatures almost broke their necks to grant a moratorium to our

distressed banks, and when similar aid was extended to the life insurance companies. As the depression bit in deeper and deeper, and as thousands of Missouri farmers were threatened with foreclosure, I created a special committee of outstanding M. F. A. members in many counties with the idea that these men should do what they could to stop foreclosures, and in many instances they were successful, and meanwhile hundreds of farmers either wrote me about their situations, or came to Columbia to talk to me, and thus a large share of my time in 1933 and 1934 was devoted to this labor of love, and as I look back I am glad to say that in scores of instances I either induced the loan companies to halt the foreclosure proceedings; or to so reduce the mortgages in question that the Federal Land Bank was able to step into the picture.

In the session of 1933 we succeeded in getting the farm mortgage moratorium bill through the State Senate, only to have it "strangled" in the House Judiciary Committee on the pretext that it was "unconstitutional;" meanwhile the U. S. Supreme Court upheld the Minnesota law (after which our bill was patterned) and hereupon without a moment's delay I got to Jefferson City and almost with tears in my eyes I begged Governor Park to send a special message to the Legislature (which was then in extra session) demanding the passage of the bill, and while the Governor was sympathetic, he did not grant my request, and thus once more this relief was denied to our farmers. Then when the session of 1935 came along, again I made a fervent appeal to the House Judiciary Committee to report out this measure, reminding the members that in the 1934 campaign they had shouted long and loud about their friendship for the farmer, but once more it was a case of love's labor lost, and this because the lobby of big loan companies had gotten in its work, and behind it all loomed the sinister shadow of the mighty Pendergast machine.

To give the reader an idea of how sure the loan companies were that the bill would be killed, when a member who was on our side asked the spokesman of one of the loan companies, "Why are you so much opposed to this bill which has been passed in nearly all other Corn Belt states?" this man flippantly replied, "Well as matters now stand we have a rope around the farmer's neck, and if you pass this bill he will have one around our necks," and instead of being repelled by this brutal reply there was a loud guffaw of laughter in which many members of the committee joined.

The character of our recent Legislatures may be judged by the fact that in order to take care of more of "the boys," and to get around Constitutional Amendment No. 2 which limits the employees of the two bodies to 150 clerks, stenographers, etc., these "economy" loving statesmen in the session of 1935 induced the Permanent Seat of Government Commission to hire 55 extra "janitors" at \$5.00 per day, and thus the old saying "as thick as fiddlers in hell" could have been fittingly applied to the janitors in the State Capitol.

As the depression years passed, and as many old and stooped farmers and their wives sat in my office, and told me of their long years of bitter toil, and begged me to do what I could to save their homes, often these old farmers broke down and cried like children as in a choking voice they exclaimed, "We are old—if they take our home away from us, what is to become of us?" and as sickened and disheartened Secretary Rosier of the M. F. A. and I came away from Jefferson City on the night of the above hearing I promised myself that if I lived I would offer battle to the machine that pats the farmer on the back at election time, and then betrays him when those who prey upon him demand their "pound of flesh," and today I am carrying out this pledge. The words, "As matters now stand we have a rope around the farmer's neck, and if you pass this bill he will have one around our necks"—these words still ring in my ears, and did much to make me a candidate for governor, and now that the battle is on, where do the farm men and women of Missouri stand?

The Corrupt Pendergast Machine

So far as the Pendergast machine itself is concerned, I feel that its ruthlessness and rottenness are so well known that I need not dwell upon it at length—suffice it to say that during recent elections the big Kansas City boss has not only selected our U. S. Senators, governors and other high state officials for us, but the machine also determines who shall sit upon our Supreme Court Bench, and who shall be State Superintendent of Schools, and granting that it is an astounding situation to have our U. S. Senators and governors selected by this boss, is it not infinitely worse when our courts and schools are brought within the pale of machine politics, and this regardless of how

high minded the candidates or appointees in question may be? Not only does Mr. Pendergast decide who shall or shall not hold high office in Missouri, but he likewise dictates our policies of state government, as was demonstrated when he put his o. k. on the now notorious deal by which the State Insurance Department ruled that the fire insurance companies and attorneys should receive 80% of some \$11,000,000 of impounded insurance premium funds, while the policy holders who dug up this money at a time when it hurt will only receive 20%, and this despite the fact that the above companies were repeatedly defeated in the courts: the machine lawyers have gotten hundreds of thousands of dollars out of the above "plum tree," and some months ago the above Department made a contract by which two Kansas City attorneys who are high up in the Pendergast machine will receive 25% of more than \$15,000,000 in alleged back taxes which this Department is demanding from the fraternal life insurance companies and societies which supply protection to the poor people of our State, and if these attorneys succeed they will receive several million dollars for their fee, while the increased premium cost will compel thousands of fraternal members to drop their policies.

During recent weeks the machine has obtained complete control of the State Highway Department which spends millions of dollars annually on new road construction, and so the millions of dollars of Works Progress Administration funds that are being spent by the Government in Missouri are being dispensed by men identified with the machine.

And who is Thomas J. Pendergast that he holds a great commonwealth in the hollow of his hands? Is he a man who has had long and seasoned experience in large public affairs? No, he has never held an important public office, and makes no pretense of being informed on great state or National questions, his chief business consisting of dealing in liquor and ready mixed concrete, while for diversion he is a devotee of horse racing. And how, you ask, did such a man acquire political power that is without precedent in any state? At bottom it is very simple—for many years he has been the undisputed boss in Kansas City whose underworld crimes have long smelled to high heaven, and thus thirsting for new worlds to conquer, in the 1932 campaign he threw 100,000 or so votes from Kansas City and Jackson county behind certain state

candidates, and with this big lead these candidates easily triumphed in the primary, and this marked the launching of the mighty Pendergast machine as we know it today.

The Machine Reaching Out

In 1934 the big boss decided to send Harry S. Truman, a modest and obscure county court judge in Jackson County to the U. S. Senate, and although Truman was opposed by two strong candidates, with nearly 150,000 votes behind him to start with he was nominated. In other words, since Pendergast is in position to throw around 150,000 Kansas City and Jackson county votes to his favorite candidates he has become the supreme political dictator of Missouri, for once he has chosen his favorites other aspirants think, "What's the use?" and the fact that thousands of the above votes are fraudulent doesn't change the picture, and thus in the process the Democratic party in Missouri has ceased to exist—unless Pendergastism is destroyed, the holding of Democratic primaries in times to come will be a hollow mockery and needless expense, for under existing conditions the Democratic voters of Missouri have been completely disfranchised—unless they arise in their might and smash Pendergastism, they will have no more to say about who shall be U. S. Senator, Governor, Supreme Court Judge or State Superintendent of Schools, or who shall determine our policies of state government in times to come than if they lived in Ethiopia!

Flushed with his success in 1932, Pendergast began taking a hand at Jefferson City, and today the thousands of State employees jump at the crack of his whip, and that they know how to "beat the brush" was demonstrated in the way they delivered rural votes to Truman in 1934, and that the big Democratic politicians in St. Louis expect him to soon duplicate the Kansas City machine in their city was proven by the manner in which they almost broke their necks to climb on the Stark bandwagon, once the big boss had spoken. Nor is this all—as I write the State employees whose homes are scattered from Iowa to Arkansas are busy laying the foundation of a Pendergast machine in every county seat town, and in this they will have the help of most of the local politicians who always support candidates who they think will have loaves and fishes to dispense, and this likewise applies to many of our rural Democratic newspapers, many of which are

openly defending the machine, and this because they expect fat campaign advertising contracts and other machine favors.

And unless Pendergastism is destroyed in the forthcoming primary, what kind of a situation will we have in Missouri? With our big cities in control of the machine, and with thousands of state employees who must goose step at its command, and with scores of smaller county machines scattered through the State, will it not be possible for the machine to cast enough fraudulent votes to control Missouri for years to come? You say "The people won't stand for it?" Well has not the Pendergast machine done this very thing in Kansas City for years, and made the voters like it?

Pendergast and Major Stark

Never was the power of Pendergast more strikingly illustrated than during recent months when numerous Democrats desired to become candidates for the Democratic nomination for governor, and made a beaten path to the office of the big boss in the hope of obtaining his endorsement, and when he finally bestowed his blessing upon Major Stark, instantly these aspirants faded out of the picture, and this on the theory that when the mighty boss has spoken "it is all over but the shouting." According to the newspapers, when Major Stark emerged from the Pendergast holy of holies last fall he was so elated that the first thing he did was to have his picture taken, and then he was quoted as follows: "I am deeply gratified to secure the endorsement of Kansas City democracy for the nomination for governor. I feel this support practically assures the nomination, and I feel confident of the election." And could anybody have reflected the autocracy of Pendergast more graphically than did Major Stark in the foregoing statement, for what chance has the "democracy" of Kansas City had to pass upon his candidacy, and what of the 500,000 or 600,000 other Democratic men and women in Missouri who will not have a chance to pass upon it until the August Primary? Apparently in the opinion of Major Stark these hundreds of thousands of Democratic voters are of little consequence, and if this is not true, then after he had obtained the Pendergast blessing why did he tell the newspaper men, "I feel this support practically assures the nomination?"

Meanwhile the thousands of state employees and other politicians and friends of Major Stark are shouting two things from the housetops; first, that Stark was so popular out in the State that Pendergast was forced to endorse him, but if this was true, why was it necessary for Major Stark to pay a visit to the big boss, and why did he say, "I feel this support practically assures the nomination?"

Second, the above supporters insist that if nominated and elected Major Stark "will be his own man," but how can he be when according to his own statement the endorsement of Pendergast practically assured his nomination? Can any man accept the support of a big political boss, and then be free from his influence? Was not Governor Park an outstanding rural circuit judge, and will anybody say that he has been free from the influence of the Pendergast machine? On the contrary, have not many people in Missouri come to refer to our State Capitol as "Uncle Tom's Cabin?"

For Major Stark personally I have every respect. He comes from a fine old Missouri family that has developed the World's largest nursery, and while he has never fought the farmer's battles, and Jacks experience in state and National affairs, if he were free from the Pendergast influence perhaps he would make the good governor his friends insist, and certainly I have no desire to indulge in mud slinging at Ms expense, for I do not believe in personalities in a political campaign. However, looking at the matter frankly, what public service has Major Stark ever performed to justify him in asking for the office of governor? Should this great office be handed to a man merely because he comes from a fine family, or desires it? The reason I want to be governor is because I have long fought for the farmers of Missouri, and for lower taxes for all our citizens, and because I want to smash the Pendergast machine, and cut the costs of state government to the bone —to me the glamour of public office has little appeal!

Can the Machine Be Beaten?

During recent weeks many voters have written me, "I am for you 100%, but I am afraid you have no chance to beat the machine," and if I am overwhelmed in the Primary it is this defeatist attitude that will do it Granting that the machine is the most powerful thing of its kind that has ever been built up in any state, this doesn't mean that it cannot

be smashed into kindling wood in the forthcoming Primary if the friends of decent government will throw party lines aside and give me their united support, and from the thousands of letters I am receiving from all over the State, and from what farmers are saying to me at my meetings, this is exactly what I think is going to happen!

Granting that the machine will cast thousands of fraudulent votes against me, and that the State employees and most of the politicians and Democratic newspapers are also against me, if as many as 700,000 votes are cast in the Primary, and if those who believe in decent government will shell their coats, and fight, then it will be entirely possible for me to put an end to Pendergastism within the Democratic party, while if thousands of stalwart Republican men and women enter the Primary in my behalf as now seems certain, then the machine will be smashed beyond recognition!

I make the above analysis because * it does my candidacy great harm when a voter says, "I am for Hirth 100%, but I don't believe he can win," for this discourages my friends from putting up a real fight. That I will receive overwhelming support from the Democratic farm men and women of Missouri I think there is little doubt, but why shouldn't I receive similar

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support from the Republican farm men and women of our State? When I was battling for a farm mortgage moratorium bill at Jefferson City, was I not trying to save the homes of Republican farmers as well as of Democratic farmers? In the successful struggle I have waged to cut down the cost of county and state government, have not Republicans benefitted along with Democrats? And so as the Missouri Farmers' Association has saved increasing millions of dollars for our farmers, did I stop to ask whether these savings went to Democrats or Republicans, and therefore when for the first time these farmers have a chance to show their appreciation should some of them refuse to come to my support merely because ordinarily they have voted the Republican ticket ?

Over in Kansas thousands of Democratic farmers have been voting for Senator Capper for years because he has been the friend of all farmers, and so some years ago the farmers of Nebraska made Sam McKelvie, publisher of the Nebraska Farmer, governor, while in recent years three farm paper publishers from Iowa have been

Secretary of Agriculture, and yet none of these men built a great farm organization, or spent their best years in fighting the farmer's battles as I have done. Happily, hundreds of Republican men and women are writing me that they intend to go into the Primary for me, and where "Hirth for Governor Clubs" are being organized Republicans are signing up almost as freely as Democrats, but occasionally a Republican writes me, "If you are nominated I will vote for you in November," but such voters should remember that it is in the Primary that I need help if I am to beat the machine, and is this not more important than all other political considerations combined?

In order to vote for me in the Primary it will be necessary for Republicans to call for a Democratic ballot, and since in many counties they have no chance to elect a Republican county ticket, why should they not do this? In fact I have received literally hundreds of letters from Republican men and women who live in Republican counties, who say they are more interested in helping me to smash the machine in the Primary than they are in their county candidates, and since decent government in Missouri for years to come is involved in this contest, why is not this the common sense view to take?

In confirmation of the above, let's take a look at the Pendergast machine as it now stands: First, by casting thousands of fraudulent votes in Kansas City and Jackson County it can throw around 150,000 votes against any candidate it does not want, and this within itself is a tremendous "lead" in a statewide contest; through the thousands of state employees whose homes are scattered throughout the State, and with the aid of the local Democratic politicians who are lined up practically 100% with the machine, they have built a little Pendergast machine in almost every county, and supplied with plenty of money, will not these county machines be able to round up thousands of additional votes for the Pendergast favorites? The machine needs to make only one more move to have both the decent Democrats and Republicans of the State absolutely at its mercy, and that is to get in position to cast around 100,000 fraudulent votes in St. Louis and St. Louis county, and that it expects to do this in the near future there is not the slightest doubt, and therefore in order to play safe, should not our voters for once forget party lines, and help me to smash Pendergastism in the August Primary? Remember that once having gotten the great City of St. Louis by the throat as it now has Kansas City and the State employees, the machine will be in power for years to come, and thus will not the coming

Primary be the most important election ever held in Missouri?

As to the "New Deal"

While I believe that President Roosevelt is one of the greatest friends the masses have ever had in the White House, and especially our farmers, and while I expect to do what I can for his re-election, this doesn't mean that I agree with everything about the New Deal. I know that in asking for vast treasury funds for public works, etc., the President sought ardently to relieve our distressing unemployment situation, but in my opinion this can be done only by restoring the buying power of the people, and this must start with the millions of the farm. Again, I have had little sympathy with the so-called "brain trust," and thus in the event of his re-election I hope and believe that the President will change his course in the above premises. In any case I would rather accept Roosevelt with whatever mistakes he has made than to see Wall Street return to power, and this is a phase of the matter that all voters should consider carefully as we approach the November election, but meanwhile let us remember that to clean up Missouri is something in which all of us can Join irrespective of party!

Lowering Our Tax Burdens

And now if I should become governor, aside from putting an end to Pendergastism what would be the next great issue to which I would devote myself? It would be to get rid of hundreds of useless state employees, and to otherwise cut governmental expenses to the bone, and when the voters of Missouri consider what I have done along these lines in the past, are they not warranted in believing that I mean what I say? In 1931 I asked the directors of the Missouri Farmers' Association to authorize me to appoint a group of outstanding members of the Legislature, and to say to these men, "The M. F. A. desires that you constitute yourselves as a committee to devise ways and means to reduce taxes in Missouri, and if you will undertake this great task our Association will gladly pay your traveling and hotel expense in attending meetings, and supply the necessary stenographic help," etc., and it was in this way that the Committee on Taxation and

Governmental Reform came into being, and in order that its deliberations might be free from partisan bias I appointed five outstanding Democrats, and five equally outstanding Republicans. In addressing the annual M. F. A. Convention in 1934, and in referring to the above Committee, former Governor Caulfield said, "I regard the work which these men so unselfishly performed as the greatest constructive service ever rendered to the people of Missouri or any other state, and it is a great credit to the M. F. A. that it caused this Committee to be created." It cost our Association between \$6000 and \$7000 to pay the expenses of the above Committee, and in my opinion it was the best investment ever made in the history of Missouri, for out of its labors came the following great tax saving amendments and measures:

Constitutional Amendment No. 2 under which the two bodies of the Legislature are limited to 150 employees, whereas formerly between 800 and 900 were often put on the payrolls in both Democratic and Republican sessions. This amendment has already saved our taxpayers several million dollars.

Constitutional Amendment No. 3 which requires the governor to make up a budget to guide the Legislature in making appropriations, and giving the governor power to veto appropriation items which in his opinion are not needed, or to reduce those that are excessive, and this amendment should save millions of dollars in times to come.

A law prohibiting county courts from spending more money than the County's yearly revenue income, a "pay as you go" policy that is certain to save our taxpayers an enormous amount of money, and which if enacted years ago would have kept many of our counties from facing bankruptcy as they do at present. The Pendergast machine sought to have this law declared unconstitutional, but failed in this effort.

A law requiring the State Auditor to audit the books of all county officials who handle the taxpayer's money at least once during their terms of office. This law has already uncovered hundreds of thousands of dollars in shortages, and means honest county officials in times to come.

A law which prevents county officials from using a fictitious census basis of determining population that will pay them the highest salaries, another law which reduced the salaries of county collectors and other county officials; a law consolidating the offices of Clerk and Recorder in counties of less than 20,000 population, and another

consolidating the offices of Treasurer and Collector in counties of less than 40,000 population, and other tax saving laws which for brevity I will not describe.

Taxing Our "Hidden Wealth"

Early in 1935, at my request, the directors of the M. F. A. authorized me to create another Committee of able and experienced citizens with the view of revising Missouri's antiquated tax system, our object being to compel the several billion dollars of "hidden wealth" in our State (which consists mainly of money, notes and bonds) and the net incomes of individuals and corporations to pay their share of taxes in order that we may correspondingly reduce the present intolerable tax burden on farm land and town and city homes, and if I become governor I intend to see that this great work is completed, and is there a farmer or other home owner in Missouri who should not welcome this great and just reform?

In 1934 local taxes in Missouri amounted to the huge sum of \$87,000,000 and approximately 80% of this was assessed against our farms and town and city homes and other real estate, and this when these holdings constitute less than 50% of Missouri's wealth, and does not this reveal a situation that is outrageously unfair, and the foregoing premises may I not ask, what other candidate for governor has ever gone before the people of Missouri with a record for tax reduction that compares with mine, and this not as one clothed with official power, but as a private citizen? In these premises it is not necessary for me to rely upon glittering promises—I can point to millions of dollars which our taxpayers have already saved through my initiative!

Although the State is deriving nearly one million dollars per month from the increased sales tax, and several million dollars increased income from the liquor tax and the state income tax, and notwithstanding that the state administration hasn't kept faith with our deserving old folks on Old Age Pensions (a fact which I have repeatedly denounced) some months ago it was compelled to borrow \$750,000 with which to meet its payrolls—in other words, in its zeal to "take care of the boys," the more millions our taxpayers fork over to it, the more the machine demands, and how much longer will our people stand it?

A Legislative Council

What we need to do in Missouri is not to constantly pay more in taxes, but to so reorganize local and state government that we will be able to save much revenue that is now being wasted by the politicians and job holders, and to this end if I should become governor I would immediately ask the Legislature for authority to create a Legislative Council of a dozen or fifteen outstandingly able and unselfish Missourians, and then I would say to these men, "Now let us see how we can cut the expense of local and state government in Missouri to the bone, and give our taxpayers real value for their money," and does anybody doubt that this effort would accomplish the greatest governmental reform in the history of our State? As I recently said, why should we not try to make a dollar spent for taxes represent as sound value as a dollar spent for coffee or sugar?

No More Farm Roads?

And now I come to a matter that should tremendously interest most of our farmers: In 1920 I vigorously opposed the \$60,000,000 road bond issue, and I likewise opposed the \$75,000,000 issue in 1928, and I did this not because I was unwilling that our big cities which contribute so heavily to our road funds should have the great cross-state road system which they desired, but because I did not think it wise to put the State Highway Department into the State Constitution where it is beyond the reach of the Legislature, and last but not least, because under the system as proposed I was sure our farmers would get the hot end of the poker, and this is exactly what has happened. When the above bond issues were launched the shout, "Lift Missouri Out of the Mud" resounded throughout the State, and tens of thousands of farmers took it seriously and voted for the bonds, and while up to the present time we have spent something like \$280,000,000 on a state highway system which, as it stands, I grant is "splendid," yet the fact remains that this system has been built primarily in the interest of our big cities and for tourists, trucks and buses, and as I write we have at least 100,000 miles of dirt roads in Missouri that have been left out of the deal, and not only are the farmers who live on or near these

roads as much in the mud as they ever were, but from present prospects they will remain so.

Back in 1920 I said I was perfectly willing that the cities should have their money spent on cross-state and inter-county seat highways, but that I wanted our various counties to have the right to spend their road funds on farm to market roads, but this suggestion received little or no support from even the rural members of the Legislature who didn't have gumption enough to look into the future. Two years ago, after an investigation in the Secretary of State's office, as near as I could estimate the farmers of Missouri up to that time had paid approximately \$40,000,000 in gasoline tax and motor vehicle fees, and at an average cost of \$1200 per mile this would have built 33,000 miles of all weather farm to market roads, and this leaves out of account the road taxes contributed by our hundreds of rural towns which have seen the most of their business vanish to the cities over the big highways!

When one suggests that our counties should have their road funds spent within their borders, the big road advocates point out that many counties have had twice as much road money spent in them as they have contributed, but they fail to explain that this money was spent on crossstate or inter-county seat highways that directly benefit only a fraction of the farmers of the average county. Mind you, I agree that of its kind we have a splendid highway system, but I do not agree that this system has been fair to the vast majority of our farmers who were led to believe that they would be "lifted out of the mud," and who contributed their full share to the building of the big highways. During the last two winters thousands of our farmers could see tourists and ponderous trucks roll merrily along over the big highways, and yet often the dirt roads were in such an impassable condition that it was almost impossible to hold rural funerals, while rural mail carriers either rode horseback or gave up trying to deliver the mail, and as the children of these farmers wearily trudged back and forth to school they were forced to wade through mud ankle deep, and thus while our highway system may be "splendid" for our larger towns and cities, will anybody say that it is "splendid" for the vast majority of our farmers?

Last year when the WPA was launched (which is in charge of a high-up Pendergast lieutenant) I called a convention of county court judges, county road commissioners and engineers at Jefferson City in the hope of having a substantial part of these new millions

of government funds set aside for farm roads, and while we had a great meeting that filled the House of Representatives Hall to overflowing, and much enthusiasm was manifested, I have been dismally disappointed in the results— somehow when there is a feast of good things the farmer is always compelled to eat at the second or third table, and often not at all. In this connection, farmers do not ask for “fancy” roads with costly engineering, etc.—all they want is a well drained road that follows the present road locations, and that they can travel over any day in the year, and in my opinion roads of this kind can be built in North Missouri at not to exceed \$1500 per mile, and for half this sum in Southern Missouri. In my long battle for farm roads I have never heard the voice of Major Stark raised in their behalf, and in 1928 when he was Chairman of the State Citizens Road Bond Committee which sponsored the \$75,000,000 bond issue he had a golden opportunity to do this, and in answer to what was meant by farm to market roads I take the following from a pamphlet issued by the above Committee:

“The farm to market roads in the course of time will be the vast network of feeders to the larger veins or arteries of commerce laid out by law as the highway system. It is through these roads, built and maintained by State money, that the vast road system will reach down to the very closest contact with all the farms of the State!”

This is what Major Stark’s Committee said to our farmers back in 1928 when it wanted them to vote more bonds, but with the \$75,000,000 practically spent, has this promise been kept, or does anybody seriously believe that it ever will be so long as the influences that have directed our highway policies remain in control? I don’t charge that they are not carrying out their supplementary road program, but I do charge that they did not act in good faith with the farmer in the above quotation. In a recent newspaper statement Mr. Hugh Stephens of Jefferson City, President of the Citizens Road Association of Missouri, pointed out that in 1938 the Constitutional amendment governing the gasoline tax and motor vehicle fee revenue will expire, and in these premises Mr. Stephens stated that the two big questions which must be answered in the near future are, first, is our present highway mileage all that we can maintain in times to come with the road funds that will be available, and second, shall our present road funds be augmented with additional taxes? And what do these questions imply? Either that we must vote more bonds of which, as usual, the big highways will get the chief benefit, or

failing to do this, that the road funds that will henceforth be available will be needed to maintain the existing system, and thus if those who have been directing our highway policies have their way, does not the prospect for more farm roads look darker than ever before?

Recently Mr. Cutler, State Highway Engineer (who I think is an honest and able man) stated that many of our early built highways are obsolete, and cause many accidents, and thus will not their rebuilding or repairing entirely wipe out funds for more farm roads? Not only have our highway policies been directed by influences which have lost little sleep over the farmer and his family, but during recent months the Pendergast machine has obtained complete control over the State Highway Commission, and since this body has millions of dollars to spend each year, is this surprising? It seems to me that my long fight for a square deal for our farm roads should entitle me to the vote of every farm man and woman in Missouri, and now that apparently the greatest crisis our farm roads have yet faced is approaching, where will our farmers stand? Should not our Republican farmers be more concerned about this than helping some friend get a county office?

If I should become governor I would immediately demand the resignation of the Pendergast men on the State Highway Commission, and while I would put men in their places who would adequately maintain our existing highway system, certain it is that I would demand that henceforth our farmers get a square deal in road building, and thus carry out the hope that Mayor Stark's Committee held out to them in 1928! Remember what I say — as matters now stand our farmers are about to be driven entirely out of the road picture!

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As to Campaign Funds

During recent weeks the county Democratic Conventions which have been held show how strongly the Pendergast machine is already entrenched in our rural districts, for not only did these conventions largely select machine delegates to the State Convention, but many of them endorsed Major Stark for governor, and what right did they have to do this before the Democratic voters of these counties had a chance to be heard, and will not

these voters resent this? All over Missouri the vast army of State employees and hundreds of others who want jobs are organizing Stark for Governor Clubs, and thus as our rural voters watch this performance they can get a good picture of the machine in action— actuated by the spoils of office, it intends to keep on running Missouri, and what the people think or desire cuts little figure!

And now a word about campaign funds, the importance of which few people appreciate. A recent newspaper article stated that Major Stark has rented an entire floor in an office building in Jefferson City for his headquarters, while I must run my campaign with the regular little force of The Missouri Farmer; also that the machine will raise a big "war chest" to defeat me goes without saying, and by shaking down the State employees, and those who share in the machine "rackets," this will be an easy matter, and since it costs thousands of dollars to run for governor if the expenditures are confined to nothing more than literature, radio addresses, traveling expenses, campaign buttons, automobile stickers, etc., where am I who am poor to obtain these funds? Well, as in the near future I explain to people over the radio what Pendergastism means, and why I am fighting it, I intend to ask those who live in the towns and cities, and who believe in decent government, to send me a dollar contribution, but what response I will get to this appeal remains to be seen.

Why will I not ask farmers to send me dollar contributions? Because I know there are many farmers who cannot contribute outright this small sum without hardship, and I would rather be defeated than to accept a dime from someone who cannot afford it. However, I hope that many farmers who read this statement will send me a dollar for a year's subscription to The Missouri Farmer, and while it costs about this much to print the paper, yet the larger our circulation, the larger our advertising income, and thus this will help out a lot, and if in a year from now a farmer doesn't think the paper was worth a dollar I will cheerfully refund it. Already I have drawn heavily on my meagre funds, and I just can't keep on doing it. Every mail brings requests for literature, campaign buttons, automobile stickers, posters, etc., and all I can reply is, "I will send them as soon as possible." It will cost at least \$50 to put this farm appeal into the rural mail boxes of the average county, and with 114 counties this alone will mean \$5700, and therefore is it too much when I ask farmers to send me \$1.00 for a year's subscription to The Missouri

Farmer which is conceded to be one of the best farm papers in the Corn Belt? When this appeal shows up in the rural mail boxes of a county I hope some friendly farmer or farm woman will call up the neighbors and make up as big a Club of subscriptions as possible, for unless this is done many will forget to mail in their subscriptions, for "everybody's business is nobody's business." Under existing conditions nobody but a rich man, or one who is willing to sell his soul to the big political bosses or corporations can run for governor, and therefore unless the people are willing to help out a poor candidate in a modest way, will they have any right to complain about "rotten government?"

Where farmers live outside the district of an M. F. A. Elevator or Exchange, and desire to organize Farm Clubs so they can save money by buying farm commodities through our Association, I will gladly send them the necessary literature.

Old Age Pensions

One of the planks in my platform is for fair treatment of our deserving old folks. In 1932 the voters of Missouri declared for old age pensions by a majority of over 700,000, and the Park administration has not kept faith in this respect; our old folks were led to believe that they would receive \$30 per month for individuals, and \$45 for man and wife, and while the Federal Government stands ready to put up its half of this sum, the state funds are hopelessly inadequate, and this is why last winter I suggested a special session of the Legislature to remedy this distressing situation. As matters now stand, the government will only contribute \$2,500,000 for old age pensions in Missouri, that is, it will only match the \$2,500,000 of state funds that have been appropriated, but if we supply \$5,000,000 or \$7,500,000 in state funds (or whatever amount is necessary) it would immediately duplicate this amount—in other words, our old folks will lose several million dollars of government funds this year because the Park administration is not going 50-50 with the government, and with greatly increased revenues from the 1% sales tax, and from liquor and the state income tax, and after having stopped relief funds on April 1st, should it not be able to do this?

Where old folks have no relatives who can help out, and are too old to work even if they could find work, should not society see to it that they have food and shelter for their

remaining days? All I can say is that if I should become governor I will see to it that our State keeps faith with these old folks. Recently Major Stark stated that he favors maximum old age assistance, but if he does, why didn't he join me last winter in demanding an extra session of the Legislature to supply more funds? Why wait until many of our old folks are dead?

Our Public Schools

In the 1931 Legislature, and after a bitter fight, the Missouri Farmers' Association brought about the adoption of a new state income tax law, and then we followed this up with the Bales School Law which has for its objective an 8 months' term in every rural school at a local tax levy of not to exceed 20¢ on the \$100, and which likewise sought to open the State's high schools free of charge to the farmer's children. I regard this as one of the best rural school laws in the Nation, and the only reason it has not been put into full effect is because the income tax and other revenues shrunk greatly after its adoption; as a friend of our rural schools I want to see the Bales Law made 100% effective as soon as possible.

The Greed for Jobs

Almost without exception the Democratic politicians big and little are against me, and this was to be expected not only because they desire favors from the machine, but because they know that if I become governor I will strive to cut the cost of government to the bone, and this would mean hundreds of fewer jobs, and do not politicians live on jobs? In many counties the so-called "court house rings" are also against me, and since in the Legislature in 1933 I was instrumental in lowering the salaries of certain county officials, and consolidating certain offices in certain counties, is this attitude on their part surprising? However, we have many county officials who are deeply grateful for the offices they hold, and who are willing to serve for less money in these desperate times, and the most of these men favor my candidacy, even though for political reasons of their own they may not do so openly.

Look Out for "Mud Slinging"

Unless all signs fail, as the contest for the governorship progresses it will be one of the bitterest Missouri has ever seen, and thus my friends should be on their guard. Knowing that they cannot successfully attack my public record, they are practically certain to attack me in a personal way by a "whispering campaign" if not openly, and thus it will not be surprising if I am charged with having stolen mules or with robbing a bank or other similar things. During recent months two newspaper charged that I have "gotten rich off the farmers of Missouri," and in each case I invited the editors to come to Columbia to get the actual facts from my office records, and that failing to do so I would address mass meetings in their home towns, and both editors immediately wrote back that they would be glad to publicly retract their statements and they did this. No one will deny that the farmers of Missouri and the Country have made the Stark family wealthy, but if the Starks have given farmers fair treatment, who has a right to complain?

In many communities they are saying that I get a "rakeoff" on the commodities handled by the M.F.A., or did in the past, and a more infamous lie was never uttered, and when my friends hear this statement I hope they will offer the man who makes it \$500 if he can prove it, and if he does, I'll gladly dig up the money!

Here and there some of the machine newspapers have hinted that I am not a Democrat, and if by this is meant a "yellow dog Democrat" who votes for any kind of candidate I plead guilty. As is well known, President Roosevelt has several Republicans in his cabinet, and presumably he appointed them because he believed they were peculiarly fitted for their responsibilities. Generally speaking, however, I was making Democratic speeches when many of the lieutenants of the Pendergast machine were still wearing dresses, and evidently President Roosevelt has a rather high regard for me, for after I had told him that I didn't want any job, in 1934 he nevertheless named me along with former Governor Caulfield and Col. Harry Scullin of St. Louis as a member of the PWA Board of Missouri, while during the recent winter he named me as one of five private citizens in the U. S. to serve on the National Commission to commemorate the adoption of the Federal Constitution next year. In other words, the President has gone

farther out of his way to manifest his good will toward me than he has with any other Democrat in Missouri, and this when he knows that I do not approve all the New Deal policies.

What is the leading question the Pendergast clans are asking of each other as they discuss the governorship these times? I know whereof I speak when I say that this question is, "To what extent will the farm men and women line up for Hirth, and how many Republicans will go into the Primary for him?" Outwardly they are shouting, "Hirth hasn't a chance to win," but this is mere bluff—they expect me to carry nearly every rural County, and what they are wondering about is whether they will be able to overcome this with machine counted or controlled votes in the towns and cities!

For many years our big cities have ruled Missouri, and thus our farmers have had to be content with the "scraps" that were dished out to them in the Legislature and elsewhere—I lost the fight for a farm mortgage moratorium bill in three recent Legislatures because the cities were on the side of the big loan companies, and so town and city men dominate the State Highway Department and all the other important boards and offices, and they do this whether the administration in power is Democratic or Republican, and therefore wouldn't it delight the gods if for once in their lives our farmers threw foolish partisanship to the wind, and helped me to crush the machine in the August Primary?

And the farm men and women of Missouri have the power overwhelmingly to do this very thing, and to teach the selfish politicians of both parties in Missouri a lesson they will not forget for the rest of their lives, and I repeat, wouldn't it be wonderful? And with decent government more menaced than ever before in the history of our State, won't our rural voters make the most of this opportunity? Or will they permit their county candidates and the machine politicians and newspapers to whip them into line? Only the Primary can tell this story, but this much is true—if as the most pronounced farmer's candidate who has ever offered himself for the governorship in the history of Missouri the machine succeeds in defeating me, then more than ever before they will laugh up their sleeves, and say, "There is no need of fearing the farmers—they do a lot of talking, but when the election rolls around they vote their party tickets and thus they are harmless." This is the way the politicians have regarded the farm vote for many years, and in the

August Primary our rural voters will either demonstrate that they are still right about it, or they will declare their independence in a manner that will electrify the Nation!

Why has the American Federation of Labor become the greatest power of its kind in the Country? Because years ago laboring men quit voting a party ticket, and lined up for their friends whether they were Democrats or Republicans, and what a great day it will be for decent government in Missouri if our farmers will completely ignore party lines in the August primary and help me to crush the Pendergast machine!

And now "anything that is worth doing is worth doing well," and so why not start a "Hirth for Governor Club" in every school district or voting precinct, and see how near the voters will sign up 100% irrespective of party? I will be glad to send blanks for this purpose, and the moment this appeal reaches a county I hope several good Democratic farm men and women in each precinct will get their heads together, and get busy; when a school district or a precinct Club has been organized, a President and Secretary should be chosen, and an Executive Committee of at least five appointed, and I hope some good Republican farmer and farmer's wife will be asked to serve on this Committee, and I say this because where the latter are willing to support me they should have representation, and already in many communities Democrats and Republicans are jointly waging a fight for me. It is of the highest importance that an organization for me be perfected in every school district or precinct without delay, and that the Secretary get in immediate touch with me, for nobody knows what kind of eleventh hour tactics the machine will employ—I need a key man I can get in touch with within 24 hours in every school district or precinct in the State, and where Clubs are not organized for me, my friends should organize informally and elect a Secretary who will get in touch with me.

A day or two before the Primary every voter who is for me should be urged to get to the polls without fail, and I hope that each Executive Committee will remain at the polls as much of the day as possible not only to check my friends as they vote, but to see whether money is being used or not—remember the machine will have plenty of money, and that it will not hesitate to spend it if it thinks it can get by with it!

In conclusion, I have written in the hope of giving the farm men and women of Missouri the real picture of the disgraceful situation that exists in our State at this time.

Except that I have spent the best years of my life fighting the farmer's battles as best I knew how, and in standing for public policies which I believed to be right, there is little else I can say of myself. Born of poor German immigrant parents, I cannot boast of springing from a distinguished family—my parents lived the life of humble farmers, and worked hard, and taught me to do likewise. In the matter of ancestry I can say without sacrilege that in at least one respect I am like Lincoln— both of us came from poor and obscure families, but both of us had a wonderful Mother, that most precious and priceless of all inheritances.

Sincerely Submitted,
William Hirth, Publisher,
THE MISSOURI FARMER.
Columbia, Mo.
July 4, 1936.

Later Information

Since writing the above I have addressed large crowds in different parts of the State, and unless all signs fail we will make history in the August Primary—from present indications there will be a landslide for me in the rural districts in which the farm men and women of Missouri will almost completely forget party lines in helping me to defeat the machine!

Also with two of the big St. Louis newspapers supporting me in my fight for decent government, and with the more than 200,000 members of the fraternal life insurance companies and societies organizing for me irrespective of politics, and with the thousands of deserving old folks who are getting a raw deal on old age pensions practically solid for me, with these powerful influences my chances of defeating the machine are growing brighter daily. Here let me say that our County Fire Insurance Mutuals need to wake up and join the crusade of the fraternal life insurance companies, for if the machine continues to control the State Insurance Department our County Mutuals will face a precarious future. Here are several ways in which my farm friends can help out

tremendously from now on:

First, whether you organize a Club for me or not, several farm men and women who are friendly to me should immediately begin a house to house canvass in every rural school district, and see how near the farm voters will line up 100% for me irrespective of party—remember that many voters pay little attention to candidates or issues unless their neighbors get them interested. Then remember that the machine will not only cast thousands of fraudulent votes against me, but that it will also get all its friends to the polls—what a sad commentary it will be if I am defeated because thousands who are for me don't take the trouble to go to the polls, and this applies to farm women as well as men!

Second, I am in distressing need of enough campaign funds to put this appeal in the rural mail boxes of every county, for as matters now stand I won't be able to reach more than half of our counties, and therefore is it too much to ask my friends to make up a Club of subscriptions for The Missouri Farmer in each school district from those who can spare a dollar without hardship? I can win if the farm men and women of Missouri will for once lay politics aside, and really roll up their sleeves, and fight, and as the only real farmer who has ever asked for the governorship, I feel it will be many a day before another farmer will offer himself for this office if I am defeated.— William Hirth.

The Machine Will Get Its Friends to the Polls. Will We do Likewise?