

The State and the Farmer. By L. H. Bailey.
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This is a specially timely book. We have very soon to solve the problem how



PROF. L. H. BAILEY.

far the state can encroach wisely on the individuality of the land tiller. Mr. Bailey does not believe that interference on the part of the Government is needed on account of abandoned farms or farm values running down. Between 1900 and 1905 all medium farms advanced in value 18 per cent. Dairy farms went from \$46 per acre to very nearly \$60; fruit farms from about \$70 to \$85; truck farms from about \$70 per acre to over \$80. We know that farm values are still

increasing, and that the ratio of increase is more rapid. As for abandoned farms, it is mostly false reading of the census. There has been considerable consolidation of farms, but in one township where there were forty-five vacant farmhouses, it was found that not an acre was out of cultivation. There are a few deserted houses here and there, and these stand for families who have sold out, while their lands are merged in neighbors' possessions. The real difficulty just now is nothing that the Government can properly meddle with, but will be cured by natural evolution. It was no small thing for the farm population of the United States to shake off old methods and readjust itself to new tools, new methods, new ideas all around. You will have to give the farmer time, and it will take a full generation yet before he can work in the bulletins, showered upon him by the National and the State governments, to make them tell in the way of small farms better tilled and every way up to date. It is very questionable whether President Roosevelt's commission can find anything else to do than advise the Government to keep its hands off. Professor Bailey insists that every governmental factor that touches agriculture should aim only at developing personal initiative and local community feeling. You cannot impose on our rural communities a system worked out by a commission. What the farmer does specially need, according to Professor Bailey, is a better banking system. Our present banks do not touch the farmer except to drive him to the usurer. Professor Bailey also counts out the fairs, which have been supposed to stand for agriculture. These huge and costly concerns are utterly meaningless so far as the land tiller is concerned. They exhibit prodigies and get lost in horse racing. The rural church and the rural school each get their required and frank discussion at the hands of the author. The book needs and deserves a very wide circle of readers. It must not, however, be cursorily read and laid aside. The problems discussed are very deep, and we close our review with an endorsement of the statement that we must have a new sort of statesmanship as well as a new sort of farmers.