

cause a thing is new, it is good. To date Florida has taken the line of giving the middleman more, and returning the grower less than the direction

of getting the grower the most out of the crop to be marketed.

THE FLORIDA CITRUS COMMISSION AND ITS WORK

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Mr. President, Members of the Florida State Horticultural Society, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The subject assigned to me is "The Florida Citrus Commission and Its Work." The Commission and its work might be taken in two ways—one, its record of performance; the other, the job to be done. I might bore you with statistics on past performance, or I might touch lightly upon such points and devote my remarks not to the past, but to the future, to the work before us. Perhaps a mixture of both will present the better picture.

Everyone knows that the state citrus laws, under which the Commission operates, were enacted by the last Legislature, but few people know what caused the sudden demand upon the part of the industry for these regulatory measures. Many theories have been advanced and I am sure that all of them have some foundation in fact, for they are good reasons as to why the industry was brought together. But most people seem to overlook the spark which was hot enough to weld the various interests of the industry into a unit of sufficient force to bring about the enactment of the present citrus laws. That spark was a fight, a fight within the industry, that dragged through a whole season.

I am a man of peace myself, but for once I must confess that some good came from a fight started by selfishness and jealousy, as all fights are. For many years many attempts had been made to establish a more uniform and a less competitive system of marketing. The Florida Citrus Exchange, the Fruitman's Club, the Clearing House and several other organizations made efforts at stabilization, and each failed to achieve that goal for the industry because of a selfish, uncontrolled element. With the AAA, under the

new deal, offered control of shipments from the grading of the fruit through to the markets, under an interstate commerce setup, an opportunity seemed to be at hand to control by federal law those who would not co-operate in matters affecting the welfare of the industry. A marketing agreement was drafted which was satisfactory to the required percentage of growers and shippers, and the Secretary of Agriculture appointed a control committee for the 1933-34 season which worked to the great advantage of growers that season. But as interests were thrown together which had always been suspicious of each other, considerable friction developed before the end of the season. A real row was averted only by the abrogation of the agreement.

Immediately a movement was started to get a new agreement for the 1934-35 season, an agreement that was to correct the evils of the first one. I am not going into all of that. Suffice to say a control committee was appointed under the second agreement which was factional from the start. It spent the entire season, a season complicated by a freeze, playing politics, petty politics, with Washington sitting as a judge and dealing out one reprimand after another. Each faction on the committee was dissatisfied—each faction suffered from frustration, and frustration, my friends, is the greatest little stirrer-upper in itself that one can imagine. They chafed under the arbitrary exercise of authority by Washington. They wanted to fight in their own way. So it was natural that soon the question ran from mouth to mouth: "Why can't we have our own citrus laws?" And even after it was decided to seek these state laws, it was a long pull. Fortunately talent was called in that had not been consulted before or involved in other controversies, and that helped matters a

lot. But it was a scrap up until the day when the citrus bills were signed and made law.

It wasn't long until a new fight started again. Have you ever considered why the Governor waited so long to appoint the members of the Commission? He waited because he wanted the pulling and gee-hawing to die down and give bitterness time to wear itself out. The scrapping and accusations of chicanery persisted, however, up until the minute when the Governor appointed the Commission. I want to stress that point. It will not be hard for most of you to realize what went on, for that was the way the citrus industry always worked, with nothing but suspicion and distrust. Almost every factor in the industry was stirring up unrest and being mighty active about it. I emphasize that point because then a marvelous thing happened, an unaccountable reversal, a reversal so sudden, so complete, that the best of us doubted our senses. For from the minute that the Commission was appointed there has been no squabbling. There have been only the kindest things said of every member of the Commission, of the citrus laws themselves, and, wonder of wonders, of one shipper by another. Suddenly everybody began to smile and a harmonious and friendly feeling pervaded the old battle ground. There you have the cause for whatever measure of success the Commission has had.

Any group of growers could have done as well, but none could have done anything without the harmonious support of the industry. No one knows why the old-time distrust faded away and stayed away, but I submit that one large factor has been the active and sincere interest of Governor Sholtz. From the moment that he signed the new citrus laws, and he signed them over considerable opposition, he has never lost touch with the situation. He has proved himself to be a great and a resourceful harmonizer as well as a rigid adherent to the new citrus policy of legal, uniform operation for uniform results. He has stood, not behind us, but with us on the front line and no demand upon his time has been too great nor no task too laborious for him to give freely of his energy and wise counsel. The citrus industry needs men like Dave Sholtz.

I wish I had time to tell you about every mem-

ber of the Commission. Some of them I have known for years; others I met for the first time at our first meeting. To me they all stand out in some particular way. Each of them does his own thinking, and the viewpoint of all of them is that of the grower, because all of them are bona fide growers. Many of us also have a pretty thorough knowledge of the shippers' problems and four of the members operate large plants of their own.

We worked, at first, without committees, which was the wisest thing we ever did. This necessitated a lot of meetings, but it prevented the formation of any factions and it permitted the Commission to work as a unit, without politics. It has been repeatedly demonstrated that committee rule makes for factions, that factions make for politics, that politics make for fights, and that fights make for failure. We have no politics—neither federal, state, county, citrus or any of the other kinds. We have no alignments among the members of the Commission. The ones arguing against each other on one point will be pulling together on the next one. It has been the determination of each member of the Commission that this be so. Our work has been helped by the fortunate choice of a chairman, the election of a capable and untiring executive secretary, and the employment of a wise and energetic attorney.

The main duty of the Commission is a simple one. Fundamentally, it is to promulgate rules and regulations for the administration of the citrus laws. The most important of these relate to the standardization of grades and packs, national advertising, maturity and color added. The enforcement is in the hands of the Commissioner of Agriculture.

One of the first decisions faced by the Commission was the selection of an advertising agency. Much has been said about this matter. It looked for a day or so that a nasty wrangle might develop out of the choice of the Commission, but when two agencies operating in this state and several big Florida newspapers supported the Commission in its decision, everybody cooled off and got behind the new advertising campaign. This helped to make it successful—it could not have succeeded otherwise.

Others who follow me are to tell you the particulars of our advertising activities, but I want to take this opportunity to explain publicly why the agency of Ruthrauff and Ryan was chosen. The Commission determined to get the best it could in advertising agency service, and it gave all agencies a fair shot. We first heard fifteen minute presentations from all agencies wishing to be heard. There were thirty or more of these. From this group the Commission selected five to be heard at length. This number finally was increased to seven or eight, and all of them were given ample time to present their causes. The Commission remained in session for two days for this purpose. Any one of these agencies could have done a fine job—all were experts in their field with outstanding organizations and superlative records of performance. However, some of us had had some experience in citrus advertising and all of us knew of the constant freeze hazard that always hangs over us. Therefore we were fully decided as to what we needed: (1) a first-class agency, (2) a campaign which did not call for too great an initial outlay, and (3) a flexible campaign that could be cancelled in case of crop disaster. In amplifying these statements there is no need to explain our desire for a dependable agency. Information as to the dependability of agencies is quickly obtainable through regular commercial channels. As for the second point, a campaign not calling for too much outlay, it should be remembered that the Commission has no credit. It is not authorized to borrow money or to assume any liabilities beyond its resources, and it had no capital. It is permitted to spend only that money which is collected for the exact purpose for which it was collected. Because of this financial situation most campaigns could not be considered because they called for too large an obligation before we would know how we were coming out. Color pages in magazines must be bought months in advance, and other effective forms of advertising media can only be purchased in the same way. These could not be considered at the start of our campaign. I am certain that up to the time when Joe Busk, of Ruthrauff and Ryan, made his presentation, the Commission was a little dizzy over this problem. Mr. Busk of-

fered a campaign that we could slide into gradually, a campaign that could be cancelled overnight with the exception of a small radio obligation. The campaign he proposed was flexible, and by flexible I mean it could be changed daily as to message, locality and display. An advertising program of this kind enabled us to meet at least some of the complications of our citrus season. This advertising is, of course, commodity advertising, and commodity advertising was then new to Florida. We wanted to be free to switch our efforts to any section of the country and to participate actively in selling Florida citrus with the least lost motion and a minimum of waste in our advertising funds. Ruthrauff and Ryan was the only agency to offer such a campaign and to support its recommendations with positive proof of the success of like campaigns in selling other food and household products. The selection of Ruthrauff and Ryan was a wise choice and they have done a swell job.

You have only to compare this season's records of shipments and prices with those of the last several years to see what has been accomplished by this advertising program. This year's campaign has proved another thing which I believe will please you, and that is that the best trademark or brand name that we can use is the name Florida, a name already well sold to the American public and completely associated with sunshine, health and good living.

One of the purposes of the citrus laws is to identify Florida fruit in the markets for what it is. Rather strict rules were promulgated to accomplish this. They resulted in some complications which would make an interesting story too long to tell here. It is sufficient to say that unidentified bulk shipments are no more, that the truckmen like it, and that the trade likes it. The South, which has always been the dumping ground for our culls, has paid good prices for good fruit this season. The trade in all parts of the country reports they have had the most dependable grade of fruit this season that they have ever had from Florida.

Some of those who object to commodity advertising contend that with all of the sales organizations shooting at the advertised markets that no

rise in price is possible, and there is a lot of truth in that. All advertising campaigns, to be successful, must be closely linked with a sales plan. We have not had the results from our advertising, grand as they have been, that I believe now we are going to get. With the harmony which has prevailed throughout the industry this season I believe that there is now, for the first time, an opportunity to co-ordinate the movement of fruit with the advertising. The Commission already is working in that direction. The new federal marketing agreement will help this situation, but nothing can do much good unless both the big fellows and the little fellows in the industry will work together. I believe that they are now willing to do this.

To me this harmonious situation is the greatest benefit that we have had from the new citrus laws. It will undoubtedly lead to more orderly marketing and that will lead to better prices and a more dependable profit. Thus the whole level of the industry will be lifted and that, ladies and gentlemen, is the real work of the Commission.

In a general way I have tried to tell you of some of the things which have happened and of the situation in the industry today. I have not, however, told you how we work. We do what may appear to be a tremendous amount of unnecessary labor, but we have never refused to hear any legitimate proposal or request. You know there is always someone who has a new idea that to him is the panacea for all of the ills of the industry. You have seen this happen in other activities. We are going to hear a lot between now and November about cure-alls for the good of mankind, for I believe there is somebody running for governor right here in Florida. Well, that is what the Commission has to contend with, too—somebody always has a bright idea and wants to get out in front with it. We cannot refuse such men a hearing. They are earnest people, so we hear some rather fantastic plans for spending advertising money. One suggestion was to drop oranges, attached to small parachutes, all over the country. Another plan was to take a citrus queen from each citrus county and ride them all over the country in an airplane. Compared with well-planned advertising and dignified publicity, such

stunts as parades, floats, contests and moving pictures of fruit being picked to send to the President are just nonsense. But we believe it is good business to give every man a chance and a respectful hearing. Our doing so also gives us a chance to explain in detail our plans and the reasons for them to men who might be questioning our methods, because they think theirs are better.

One job of the Commission has been to justify its expenditures. I consider that this has been done. The money collected has been spent for the exact purpose for which it was collected and this has been done in the face of considerable battering for funds by large and influential groups in the state. Not only have these people been turned down if their plans did not fit in with ours, but they went away apparently boosters for the Commission. There is only one kind of a program that can get that kind of reaction and that is an honest program based upon solid facts, a program that has but one aim—the betterment of citrus marketing conditions.

The members of the Commission are determined to adhere rigidly to the laws under which they operate. We believe that we are here to help and not to hinder marketing activities. We will not construe these laws as blue laws—laws restricting liberties. We consider them as laws broadening and co-ordinating the rights of all. While these laws are made possible under the police powers of the state, we consider it our job not to give you a ticket for speeding, but to so straighten out the traffic that you may go as fast as you please. We have proceeded slowly so that uniform operations would be possible. We have backed off at times only to come back with greater strength because of a better understanding.

Let me give you one case in point. At the first meeting we had in Lakeland we were faced by a very determined delegation of shippers. There had been quite a wind storm and these shippers had a lot of wind-scarred fruit. But the new state laws, the laws that these very shippers had so strongly advocated, made it mandatory that such fruit be marked as culls. These shippers did not want to mark their fruit as culls, for they already had a lot of it packed under regular brands. They were determined to ship this fruit,

and the Commissioner of Agriculture would not let them do it. There were thousands of boxes on the ground and more dropping daily. We also learned that some of these shippers had come with injunctions in their pockets ready to serve and tie the Commission up in the courts, if necessary, until the fruit was shipped. Remember that this was our first meeting since we had been sworn in. Some of us didn't know each other very well. But we soon got our heads together and we soon found that we were not far apart in our ideas. If the new laws were to stand for anything they must stand for something now, we decided. We did not want to start with a lawsuit. An emergency did exist. There had been a disaster, the season was just starting, the trade in the North was waiting for fruit, somewhat pepped up over the prospect of standardized shipments and advertising. Our advertising had not started then and only a few shipments had left the state. That was the situation. What would you have done? Here was the Citrus Commission trying to get started under laws from which thousands of growers throughout the state expected so much, and on the other hand we had a few thousand boxes of fruit on the ground, some excited shippers with injunctions in their pockets, and the prospect of another silly citrus fight that might nullify all of the constructive work done the year before. I'll tell you what we did. We struggled all afternoon, but we harmonized that situation. We harmonized it by giving a little; we harmonized it by convincing those shippers that the problem was bigger than just some grapefruit on

the ground that would probably take a licking in the market anyway. We reminded them that they had made these laws, but that their responsibility for administering them now was ours and that we were entitled to a fair show. Then they began to relax a little, somebody smiled a little and then there we were with our arms around each other again. Well, it was great stuff and you can imagine how happy everybody was. We permitted them to ship the fruit that had been packed as labelled, but the fruit in the bins and on the ground they had to ship as culls or send it to a cannery. Out of this situation came the third grade for fruit, now in force. Personally, I am not so hot about this third grade. Florida, in my opinion, needs a juice grade—a grade to take all but the best textured brights and goldens and to be shipped as juice fruit. The value of the fruit is based upon its content, anyway, and not upon something which is peeled off and thrown away. Maybe some day we will have sense enough to stop selling fruit on the California plan. California fruit has appearance, but little inside of it. We have the juice content, so why not capitalize it?

The future offers many problems. Competition will be greater and more intelligent. We must meet that with more perfect co-ordination and greater advertising. Our citrus laws must be reviewed constantly to meet changed conditions. We have had a season of higher prices and harmonious operation. Let us continue to work together—I mean work, hard work. This industry must be stabilized and that is the work of the Florida Citrus Commission.