

I related how, under pressure of drought, in west Texas in 1952, my father and I moved our depleted herd to eastern Oklahoma, where we bought a small farm.

ATTEMPTING to earn an honest living, I had refused federal drought relief payments of about \$350 a month and had sowed some rich Arkansas River bottom land in wheat and oats for winter pasturage. When, with Nature's blessings, a crop of grain matured, I harvested it for feed and sold a little on the free market for supplemental income. I told him I had never put any of my wheat

in government loan or accepted subsidy of any kind. Thus I had managed to weather, independently, the worst of the most severe drought in the history of the Southwest.

In the spring of 1956, however, I received notice from the Sequoyah County Agricultural Stabilization Committee that I had 43 acres of "excess" wheat, which I had to plow under or mow off, forthwith. I did not believe that the federal government could restrict me in the free use of my property, upon which it was paying no subsidy, and against which it held no liens. I refused to comply, but harvested the entire crop.

When I took a load to town I

found that I could not sell it. No man could buy it unless I had a "Marketing Quota Card." Anybody who did would be subject to federal jail sentence. The local ASC office told me that I could not get a card without first paying a "Wheat Penalty" of \$506.11, arbitrarily computed by the committee as my fine for harvesting 43 acres of "excess wheat." I took my wheat home, stored it, and ultimately fed it to my cattle on the same land upon which it was grown.

Disgusted with federal interference and hard pressed by low cattle

Ike's Farm Got \$2000 For Not Growing Corn

prices, when my wife and I were expecting a baby we

moved to town and I took a job as a research analyst. The Federal Government, however, followed me up. In April, 1957, the Justice Department brought suit against me in the United States Court for the Northern District of Texas at Dallas, demanding the penalty of \$506.11. My crime was in trying to live and work my farm as a free man.

Now, I told my Philadelphia acquaintance, I was in Washington with my attorneys, who were taking the deposition of Secretary of Agriculture, Ezra Benson, to be used in my trial. I had just left my Congressman's office—where I had been to complain of the injustices that were being perpe-

trated under the immoral Agricultural Act. I had complained particularly of the violations of my individual rights under the Fifth and Tenth Amendments to the Constitution.

My Congressman had told me that I simply "didn't understand;" that American agriculture could not be *decontrolled* because our farmers could not compete, "the world situation being what it is." My Congressman told me that I should be a lawyer fully to appreciate the complexities of the "problem" and that, anyway, I was "pretty well off."

I said that I understood English; I had read the Constitution; and nowhere in it did I find authority for the federal government to do what it is doing to me and thousands of other American farmers. I emphasized to my Washington representative that I am the best arbiter of my condition, that I am not "pretty well off" when I am

denied free use of my property by an arbitrary government. I explained that I wanted no government aid, only a free man's right to support myself and my family.

As the taxi driver stopped at the curb, I concluded my story as to what had brought me on this expensive trip, which I could not afford, to Washington. The liberty-lover from Philadelphia was sympathetic, if incredulous, as he wished me well and walked away. I doubt that he will say again to anyone, "In America you can grow anything on your land that you want to—anything but marijuana."

Just before going to press Mr. Haley told us that he intends to stick at this fight and take his case, if allowed, to the U.S. Supreme Court. All MERCURY rural readers who want to keep informed as to Mr. Haley's experience should write to P.O. Box 1305, Dallas, Texas.

Savings of a Lifetime

A St. Louis airline reservation agent was using his best high-pressure salesmanship on a vigorous elderly woman who was taking a trip to New Orleans.

"Now you say that it takes less than four hours to get all the way to New Orleans," the woman thoughtfully repeated.

"Yes, three hours and fifty-five minutes," the agent repeated with pride. After a moment, the old lady announced, "Hmmp! Guess I'll take a train."

"But, Madam, look at the time you'd save by flying," the agent protested.

"Young man," the elderly lady replied icily, "I've been saving time since I was a young woman. The time has come for me to use some of it."

—LUCILLE J. GOODYEAR

The Farmers' Reuther

JAMES G. PATTON

by Politicus

IN 1956, at the height of the Washington struggle over flexible farm price supports, the Capitol was astonished to note the arrival of a formidable number of mid-west farmers, coming in chartered buses, and protesting against the proposed program. It seemed as if a major grass roots movement of farmers was getting under way.

Then Washington took a second look.

"It's only Patton's old crowd from the Farmers Union," the flexible supports people agreed. James G. Patton had staged his annual show in Washington.

In every agricultural dispute since 1934, the National Farmers Union has been the noisy left wing. Only once has Patton, its long time president, found himself in complete agreement with the Government. That was in the second Truman administration when Charles F. Brannan was Secretary of Agriculture. Brannan, a fellow Denvertite, was Patton's choice for the Secretaryship. The Brannan Plan

found in Patton an enthusiastic drum-beater.

When Brannan went out of office in 1953, he found a welcome sign on the doormat of the Denver national offices of the Union. He is now the NFU general counsel.

Patton and Brannan get along very well together; they are both demagogues, in the Milo Reno and "Sockless" Jerry Simpson tradition. Patton is full of impressive talk about his battles for the small, family-size farm, against the soulless corporation farm which has reached its peak in California. He is a past master at arousing enmity between farm groups, his particular target being the powerful National Farm Bureau Federation. In his infighting among farm groups he has been able to win sporadic cooperation from the National Grange, and from the smaller National Council of Farmer Cooperatives and the National Milk Producers Federation.

It would be a mistake to underestimate Patton's importance. In