

Farmers Packet

Source: *Farmers' Declaration of Independence*, 1873.

We, therefore, the producers of the state in our several countries assembled...do solemnly declare that we will use all lawful and peaceable means to free ourselves from tyranny of monopoly, and that we will never cease our efforts for reform until every department of our Government gives token that the reign of licentious extravagance is over, and something of the purity, honesty, and frugality with which our father inaugurated it, has taken its place.

That to this end we herby declare ourselves absolutely free and independent of all past political connections, and that we will give our suffrage only to such men for office, as we have good reason to believe will use their best endeavors to the promotion of these ends; and for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our fortunes, and our scared honor.

Purpose	
Point of View	
What is the document saying?	

Source: Letter from Oliver Hudson Kelley, founder of the Grange, to other Grange officers urging the opposition of monopolies by the organization, 1868.

Now is the time to sound the keynote of the Order. *Sound it loud*...it will take...Faith will remove mountains...Come down among the people; don't stay up among the politicians. If you hit the point right, you will sweep the West. You must get into the farmers' pockets to reach their hearts, and a lively palpitation there invigorates their minds...Mark my words, there is a revolution growing among the people, and if you strike the right chord...the Patrons will be a power, and you yourselves at the head of it.

Intended Audience	
Point of View	
What is the document saying?	

Source: Testimony by Aaron Jones, head of the Grangers, at the Chicago Conference of Trusts (1899), attended by the governors of several Midwestern states as well as by representatives of labor, manufacturers, and the farmers.

Every citizen of this Republic should be free to use his labor as will best contribute to his benefit and happiness; not, however, infringing on the rights of any other citizen. The right to acquire, own, control, and enjoy the use and income of property is an inalienable right that should be enjoyed by each individual. Governments are organized and laws are enacted to better protect life, liberty, and the ownership and use of property. It is the legitimate function of government to protect its citizens in the full and free enjoyment of these rights. It is for this security of life and the ownership of property that people are willing to pay taxes for the support of state and national governments.

Intended Audience	
Point of View	
What is the document saying?	

Source: Details of United States Supreme Court Case: *Munn V. Illinois* (1876)

Under the power inherent in every sovereignty, a government may regulate the conduct of its citizens toward each other, and, when necessary for the public good, the manner in which each shall use his own property.

When the owner of property devotes it to a use in which the public has an interest, he in effect grants to the public an interest in such use, and must, to the extent of that interest, submit to be controlled by the public, for the common good, and long as he maintains the use. He may withdraw his grant by discontinuing the use.

Historical Context	
Purpose	
What is the document saying?	

Source: Interstate Commerce Act of 1887.

That the provisions of this act shall apply to any common carrier or carriers engaged in the transportation of passengers or property wholly by railroad, or partly by railroad under a common control...for a continuous carriage or shipment...All charges made for any service rendered...shall be reasonable and just; and every unjust and unreasonable charge for such service is prohibited and declared unlawful...

That it shall be unlawful for any common carrier subject to the provisions of this act to make or give any undue or unreasonable preference or advantage to any particular person, company, firm, corporation...in any respect whatsoever...

That it shall be unlawful for any common carrier subject to the provisions of this act to enter into any contract, agreement, or combination with any other common carrier or carriers for the pooling of freights of different and competing railroads...

That a Commission is hereby created and established to be known as the Inter-State Commerce Commission...[who] shall have authority to inquire into the management of the business of all common carriers subject to the provisions of this act.

Historical Context	
Purpose	
What is the document saying?	

Source: Speech by Knights of Labor leader, W.E. Farmer, at a Farmer's Alliance gathering in which he voiced the new radicalism to an enthusiastic audience, 1886.

The laboring classes must either take charge of the ballot box and purify the government or witness one of the most gigantic revolutions known for ages...Lay aside all political parties. Class legislation is robbing you. Sectional strife and hatred has downed the people...The Republicans stole the goods and the Democrats concealed them... We have labored two years and now have an enthusiasm infused among the people that all hell cannot crush out. We acknowledge no leader. Party has led the country to financial ruin...You may crush out the Alliance, the Knights of Labor, and other organizations for the laboring man but you cannot stamp out the principles they have sent throughout the land... We have an overproduction of poverty, barefooted women and political thieves and many liars. There is no difference between legalized robbery and highway robbery...If you listen to other classes you will only have three rights...to work, to starve and to die.

Purpose	
Point of View	