

Senator SMITH. I should be very glad to have you ask them.

Representative RANKIN. What is your official position, Mr. Palmer? I was not present when you began your testimony.

Mr. PALMER. I am in charge of the division of cotton marketing.

Representative RANKIN. Are you a practical cotton classer yourself?

Mr. PALMER. I am not so regarded by the Department of Agriculture. I have had experience in cotton classing, both in the commercial field and for 15 months with the board of cotton examiners in New Orleans, an organization of the Department of Agriculture, and I was given opportunity there to work with the board and made the best use of the opportunity that I could. I have some knowledge of cotton grades and staples. I do not profess to have the best; I do not profess to have a critical knowledge.

Representative RANKIN. Were you ever in the business before you went with the Government?

Mr. PALMER. Yes, sir.

Representative RANKIN. With whom?

Mr. PALMER. I was with an association of growers.

Representative RANKIN. Where?

Mr. PALMER. In California.

Representative RANKIN. How long?

Mr. PALMER. From September of 1915 until the war.

Representative RANKIN. California does not grow any short staple cotton at all, does it?

Mr. PALMER. Yes, sir; it grows all kinds.

Representative RANKIN. How much?

Mr. PALMER. The production has varied. In the beginning there was some acclimatized Egyptian cotton; later some other varieties.

Representative RANKIN. In order to be as brief as possible I want to ask you what are the determining factors—if it is not a fact that there are three determining factors in grading cotton: Staple, grade, and character. That is correct, is it not—or do you know?

Mr. PALMER. I would say this, Mr. Rankin. I can give you a publication of my own in which I have described that exactly—

Representative RANKIN. No.

Mr. PALMER. If you will kindly allow me just a moment—

Representative RANKIN. No; I do not care to take up the time of the committee with argument. That is a plain open and shut question, and I don't care to read any literature on it. I only ask you if it is not a fact that those are the three prime factors in grading cotton.

Mr. PALMER. There are three elements of quality in grading cotton that are ordinarily taken account of.

Representative RANKIN. What are they?

Mr. PALMER. The first is grade. Second, length of staple; and the third is what we commonly call character.

Representative RANKIN. What do you mean by "staple?"

Mr. PALMER. By "staple" we mean the measured length of fibers.

Representative RANKIN. The minimum that you are permitted to pass under the cotton futures act is what?

Mr. PALMER. The minimum length is seven-eighths.

Representative RANKIN. Any cotton falling under seven-eighths that is passed by any of your classers fails to meet the requirement—or whether it is passed by your classers or not?