Failure of a Mission

GOVERNOR Dewey is recognized, with abundant reason, as a capable, intelligent executive. He has proved this beyond question in the eight years of his businesslike administration in Albany. Previously, he had established himself as a fearless racketbuster and he has also shown that he can exercise vigorous leadership.

It is regrettable, therefore, that, in spite of his fine record as Governor, Mr. Dewey has proven himself so happy and spineless in agricultural matters, especially milk. In this field he has devoted himself pretty much to words and uninformed promises, and to destructive criticism of others, with no positive program of his own. If ever a man had opportunities galore, and the natural ability as well, to do some really constructive work for his fellow dairymen, it was Mr. Dewey. But he has never taken advantage of either.

One reason, perhaps, for the Governor's apathy on the milk question is his apparent reliance on the wrong people for advice and guidance in agricultural matters. This must certainly have been the situation in the case of Mr. Dewey's recent milk talk in Watertown, where he appeared as milk commissioner of Agriculture has never, since his appointment in 1943, even been present at milk hearings. Yet the appointment of the Governor to a milk commodity position was no more a matter of chance than the signing of the famous Elmina milk order, which had been sanctioned by his office.

The author of that speech had a special axe to grind with the Federal Milk Order and, now that the Governor has decided not to seek a third term in Albany, he could not have been such a person.

Tersely and forcefully the Governor pictured New York dairymen as victims of a price squeeze, and charged Washington not only to grind with the Federal. Milk Order and, up to that point, he was on solid ground. He charged that if the Federal Milk Order were fairly administered, milk prices would not have dropped so sharply, and that if his State government were allowed to participate in the milk hearings and amendments to the Order, things would now be a lot better for dairy farmers.

As readers of The Rural New-Yorker are well aware, we have not been sparing in our criticism of the Washington administration or of the Federal Milk Order when we thought such criticism deserved. Mr. Dewey, however, is way wide of the mark when he says that his State officials are given the brush-off by the Federal authorities. Not only is this simply not true, but the fact is that Mr. Dewey's appointees rarely, if ever, open their mouths at any milk hearings. They are always in attendance, sitting at a front table, and have the same right as others to be heard and argue their producers' cause. They have never exercised that right and Mr. Dewey's own Commissioner of Agriculture has never, since his appointment in 1943, ever been present at a Federal Order milk hearing.

Take, for example, the most recent hearing in Elmira on Class III milk pricing. Why did not the State Agriculture Department officials speak up at that session for a higher producer price? If, as Mr. Dewey says, "the State government knows our farmers' problems," why didn't they state their opposition to the low farm price for manufacturing milk and produce facts and figures, as they could have, and state their position to the Federal authorities. Not only is this simply not true, but the fact is that Mr. Dewey's own Com-...