

BETTER FARMING IN ENGLAND.

WOMEN SHARE IN FIELD PRODUCTION.

In a sketch of the food crops in Great Britain, Dr. J. W. Robertson states that the latest returns available show the following additional acreage of cereals and potatoes in 1918 over 1916:—

England and Wales	2,125,000
Scotland	300,000
Ireland	1,500,000
	3,925,000

Of the increased area in England and Wales, 753,000 acres were under wheat. He mentions the legal power by which county agricultural committees were enabled to compel farmers to improve systems of farming, method of cultivation and use of fertilizer where necessary. Over 40,000 acres were compulsorily taken over from farmers who did not improve their ways. Farmers obtained credit for increased production; tractors and horses were rented to them; labour was found among soldiers, women, part-time volunteers and prisoners of war. At one time as many as 60,000 army men had been allotted to work on the farms, but soon after farmers were very much dissatisfied with the calling up for army service of 30,000 additional men from farms. About 8,000 prisoners of war were used, and Dr. Robertson states that they worked willingly and diligently. He found their daily ration good in quality, and adequate, and he added (what will be somewhat new to us in Canada) that the German prisoners each received two parcels a month of food from Germany.

Women in the fields.

It is estimated that there are now about 270,000 women working on farms in Great Britain. A few run tractors and some do horse ploughing, but the bulk of them are employed in dairying. About 13,000 women serve as voluntary workers in the Food Production Department, on county committees and as village registrars. Farmers generally give willing co-operation to the Food Production Department, and Dr. Robertson saw very few examples of where breaking up the land had resulted in failure of the crop. He pays tribute to the excellence of the work done on these voluntary committees by men who give their whole time to the work, and he remarks: "It appeared to me that the organization work of this year would have substantial influence in improv-

ing the methods of farming, in increasing the yields of crops and raising the whole standard of agriculture... The advantage from increased production of grain would mean that at least part of the increase would be maintained after the war.

Price fixing illusory.

Dr. Robertson points out that the prices fixed for the 1918 crop had no real bearing on the situation. The price fixed for this and next year for wheat was 55s. a quarter. The discussion when he left England was whether the price for 1918 should be 72s. or 75s., or even higher. In Great Britain the subsidy for bread, due to selling the loaf at less than cost price last year, was reported to be about £40,000,000, but some authorities believed that it would total nearly £60,000,000.

Bread uncertain in France.

In the course of notes on his visit to France, Dr. Robertson, relying on actual observation, mentions that while in the army zone, and for the army itself, food was sufficient and excellent, no white bread was seen outside that zone. "At the time of the German advance," he says, "I understood that the needs of the refugees were met for a time from the army supplies. At that time and for a period afterwards there was a severe scarcity of bread in many French towns. Sometimes at some places there was no bread at all. France for nearly a year past has been getting on with the reserves of flour and bread sufficient for one week's consumption. Any interruption of the railway service is liable to prevent some part of the population from obtaining bread at all. In one town of considerable size there was said to have been no bread at all for a month."

Priority over the Army.

The effect of want of bread in some of the towns near which the American troops were located was such that Mr. Hoover came to the conclusion that essential breadstuffs and fats for the civilian population should have priority over the tonnage even of the American army and its equipment.

The following were the comparative yields of wheat in France for four years:—

Year.	Bushels.
1913..	324,464,000
1915..	226,352,000
1917..	149,333,000
1918..	224,000,000