

FARM AND DAIRY

AND RURAL HOME
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The Rural Publishing Company, Limited
PETERBORO, ONT.

"Read not to contradict and to confuse, nor to believe and take for granted, but to weigh and consider."—Bacon.

The Demand for Land

A STRIKING feature of the situation caused by war is the stronger demand for farms and country real estate generally. People are awakening to the fact that the farm offers greater security than any other line of human endeavor. They are coming to see more clearly how unstable is the machinery of commercialism. The present situation is affording them a terrible lesson on the helplessness of the landless and jobless man. Our cities all afford the spectacle of thousands of men facing an increasing cost of living on cut wages or no wages at all. Is it any wonder that hundreds are turning their eyes to the farm?

Many of these land-fevered individuals are mere dreamers. They never lived on farms and know nothing of the problems that the farmer must face. Many, however, who are now turning back to the farm, spent their early manhood there. Recent developments have taught them that the seeming disadvantages of the farm are more than counterbalanced by a security that the city cannot offer. The same security will also act in attracting more capital countrywards.

Another feature that is bound to have its effect on rural Canada is the increased immigration that will follow the war. Every European war has accelerated American immigration, and it is natural to expect that in this case also history will repeat itself. All of these factors will tend to increase land values. High land values in turn will inevitably lead eventually to the class system of Europe with its wealthy landlords and its poorer, hardworking peasantry. Do we wish for such a system in Canada? We will welcome the immigrants to our shores, but it behooves those of us who have our country's best interests at heart to see that the speculator is held in check and that the land of the country is made available for use by all the people. How can this be

done? The organized farmers of Canada have already submitted their solution of the problem. Their slogan is: "Tax land values." People then would not hold on to land if they could not use it, and those who could and would use it would have freer access to it. The whole country would benefit.

These Also Serve

THE farmer is in the limelight nowadays.

He is regarded as the one man who can save the country. His critics are almost without number. In one breath he is berated for not doing more to fill the ranks of overseas contingents, and in the next he is urged to increase his production. He is asked to house and feed the unemployed of the cities until such times as their erstwhile masters shall again require their services. In short, he is asked to shoulder in times of war a great additional public burden, of which he carries more than his fair share in the balmy days of peace.

Those who criticise the farming population because of the small numbers of our sons who are going to the front, are very apt to be the ones who call loudest for increased production. To do both is impossible. In fact, the country has already been drained of labor to such an extent that it is only with great effort that we have been able to produce as much as we do in times of peace. In order to get some idea of our preparedness for a prolonged war in which production will play a part, Peter McArthur took a hasty survey of his own district in Middlesex Co., Ont. He reports the results of his survey in the Toronto "Globe." On forty-eight farms of one hundred acres each he found only fifty-one men, several of them over seventy years of age, and only eight of military age—between nineteen and forty-five—and of these five are married and have families. When we consider that it takes at least two able-bodied men to farm one hundred acres reasonably well, the impossibility of greatly increasing production, to say nothing of at the same time swelling the ranks of our military contingents, is at once evident. The conditions that Mr. McArthur found around his own home are fairly representative of conditions in rural Canada generally. Every experienced man on the farm is needed there more than anywhere else. All honor to those who are willing to die for their country, but let us not forget that

They also serve
Who stay at home and sow.

Greater Production and Unemployment

IF help is so scarce in the country districts, why not add to the army of production by recruiting from the cities' unemployed? Those who advance this suggestion must be altogether out of touch with rural conditions and have little appreciation of the experience that is necessary to make a good farm hand. Help has been scarce for so long that farmers have planned their operations so that their farms can be handled with a minimum of hired help. On the average farm practically all of the work is done by the farmer and his family. Even operations requiring much help, such as threshing and silo filling, are accomplished by neighbors pooling their labor. To ask the farmer to change his whole system of operations in order that he may afford employment to inexperienced city men is about as ridiculous as to ask the manufacturer to change his system over night to cope with present conditions in the business world. On the farm such reorganization could not come in any case until next spring, and then only on a limited scale. Extensive reorganization could only be accomplished over a term of years, as it takes time for live stock to multiply and for rotations to be changed.

If farmers were certain that help would continue plentiful this reorganization would be accomplished in time. City working men, however, are not asking the farmer for a permanent place. When business regains its equilibrium, as it inevitably will, they will expect to go back to their old positions and city employers will be able to hold out inducements that will bring them back such as no farmer could offer to hold his help. Even were conditions favorable to a permanent supply of farm help, it would be impossible to find work for a large number of men at this season of the year. Such a nominal wage as ten dollars a month and board help would be unprofitable where the farmer himself can easily attend to all the winter work there is to be done. In fact, ten dollars a month would be as much as a farmer could afford to pay an inexperienced city man for doing work to which he was entirely unaccustomed.

There will continue to be a great demand for experienced men in the country, but the carrying of the city's inexperienced unemployed over this winter and perhaps next summer, if not done with public funds as it should be, is a matter of charity, and city employers who have felt themselves under the necessity of discharging their men on the first indication of hard times, are in as good a position financially to dispense charity as is the farmer. If we may judge by reports of dividends declared and the additions that have been made to the surplus funds of our leading manufacturers in the last ten years—and we do not begrudge them their prosperity—they are in a better position to look after their one-time employees than is the man on the land.

Tariffs Now and Hereafter

FARMERS in the United States of America have been soured on the tariff much the same way that boys are often soured on the farm. It is enough to give any boy the blues to find that the colts are always his but that the saleable horse belongs to father. It is enough to sour the farmers of any country to find that the tariff colt belongs to them, but that the tariff horse is the consumers'.

United States farmers have supported the tariff for generations. It has increased the cost of all the articles they have had to buy while at the same time it could not possibly increase the price of the goods they have to sell as, until for the last few years, they have been producing a surplus of practically everything and the price that they have received has been determined by the world's price. But they always looked forward to the good day coming when the demand of the home market that they were developing would outrun the supply and the tariff would be, as they thought, a real benefit to them.

In the last few years the tariff actually began to increase farm prices and farmers prepared to reap their harvest. What really has happened, however, has been that, on the urgent demands of the consumers of the United States, farm products entering the United States have been placed on practically a free trade basis while the tariff still continues on the goods that the farmer must buy.

Canadian farmers have been wheedled into supporting the protective tariff in much the same way as were the farmers of the United States. In the meantime our power is passing away. The voting strength of the cities is ever on the increase and when the time comes that the tariff will actually increase the prices of our products, we may find, as the farmers of the United States have already done, that the tariff horse is not for our use. Hides already on a free trade basis, and wool with but slight protection, should warn us of what will happen to the tariff on all farm products should it actually increase their price.

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