

No political issue, immediate or prospective, more vitally affects the West than that of increasing its rural population. With an up-to-date farmer on every quarter-section or half-section of land and a system of crop rotation rigidly adhered to, crop failure would be of rare occurrence and the wealth of the West increased by leaps and bounds. The smaller farms could then be given the intensive cultivation necessary for the conservation of moisture and for the destruction of weeds, and sufficient live stock bred on every farm for maintaining the fertility of the soil.

I mention these three things as being fundamental in the business of profitable farming in localities possessed of a naturally fertile soil, but supplied with limited precipitation. For drought unquestionably cuts deeper into the farmers' profits than any other single adverse agency. Barnyard manure is not a direct substitute for moisture, yet its liber application to the soil not only retains moisture on account of its water-holding capacity, but a highly fertile soil containing a large per cent of humus will produce a crop with considerably less moisture than soil that is run down and impoverished. Any system of farm management, therefore, that does not admit of thorough cultivation and the production of abundance of manure necessarily lowers the productivity of the land with every crop that is produced with increasing uncertainty. For obvious reasons, the older any state becomes under a system of farm management that constantly impoverishes the soil, the smaller will become the average yield of grain and other crops. Farming in a large way—farming with power machinery on a big scale—

## The Waste of Soil Fertility

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unless amply compensated for with live stock, spells exploitation by the present land owner, and results in ultimate impoverishment of the soil which future generations must occupy.

large acreage under cultivation, but little improvement in farming methods can be expected. There are not families enough engaged in farming to cultivate the acreage already under the plow except

tainty where a man aims entirely at large acreage and trusts in providence for timely rains and other things on which profitable crops depend—and upon transient farm hands to care for the crop during the harvesting and threshing season.

Farming is a business. It requires a better business head—a man of broader vision—to farm scientifically than to practise in any of the popular professions. The farmer, therefore must acquire business habits. He should rank as a business man.

The shrewd business men of this generation are ever on the alert to increase their profits. Otherwise they would not be classed as business men.

Only, however, by curtailing needless expense and attaining greater efficiency can business men honestly increase their annual income.

The manufacturer is governed by the same laws. Captains of industry are ever on

the alert to lessen the cost of production. This may be accomplished by utilizing by-products, eliminating waste of raw material, by the installation of improved machinery, and more especially, by promoting the efficiency of the labor they employ. Small savings made in this way aggregate tremendous totals and materially increase the dividends of stockholders. What was formerly wasted in many important industries is now relied upon as the principal source of profits. In short, how to avoid waste is given quite as much concern as the improvement of labor-saving machinery.

### The Farmer Has Been Wasteful

Agriculture has been exceedingly wasteful. The spirit of waste still abounds. This is more

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The best means of replenishing a depleted soil

### Towns Must Build the Country

The cities and towns are also interested in soil conservation. Their prosperity depends upon increasing yields of grain and animal products, as well as the farming communities. Commercial bodies, therefore, should pay more attention to increasing the population of the country districts and less to bringing increased numbers to the towns. The towns will take care of themselves. Double the population of the country and improve the efficiency of farming methods and the increased wealth produced, in consequence, will prove a sufficient stimulus for urban population. Moreover, it will prove a healthy, permanent growth for both town and country.

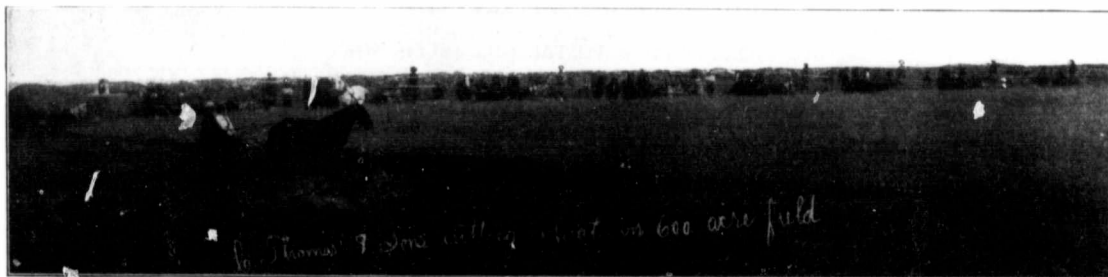
With the present limited rural population and correspondingly

in an extensive way, which always invites disaster during seasons when the weather conditions are not reasonably satisfactory or when farm laborers are not immediately available to care for the crop. The past season fully demonstrated the handicap farmers suffer from on account of their dependence upon inefficient, unreliable, transient labor.

"More farmers and fewer farm hands," obviously, is the best and perhaps the only permanent solution of the farm labor problem.

### Good Farming is Insurance

Moreover, good farming is the best insurance against crop failure. The causes that produce crop failures are not difficult to observe by expert farmers, but precautions necessary to modify or destroy their influence cannot be taken with any degree of cer-



One who has safeguarded his plant food.