

pays \$1,200 in wages, the other pays half that amount. The first one pays taxes on 300 acres while the second pays only on ten acres. The big man has nearly \$3,000 tied up in chattels, while the other has only \$300. One has \$700 rent, or in other words he is paying six per cent. interest on about \$12,000. The other has an investment of less than \$4,000 at outside figures.

From every direction come cries of the high cost of living. Increased wages are not buying as much as the salaries of years ago. Explanations are numerous. Still the prices soar. Railways are blamed, monopolies are held responsible; inexpensive advertising is credited with eating up extra profits, and extravagance on the part of wasteful consumers is said to be taking food from the working man's reach. Then comes the war devouring all before it, boosting not only food prices, but the cost of almost every conceivable commodity. But with all these, and the many other causes, there is food rotting while the people hunger, and acres of rich soil lie in idleness or are unprofitably tilled.

Science is teaching many things about the cultivation of mother earth, but the productiveness of the soil is not yet reached, nor its richness realized by man. A very striking thing in these times when folk are economizing and working long hours to eke out a bare existence is that in Old Ontario, where living is so costly, there is sufficient land unscientifically cultivated to feed a nation. Take any town or city as a centre, view the surrounding country for twenty miles, keeping in mind the cost of victuals, and only one conclusion can be arrived at, namely, that something is radically wrong. Travel any direction from the centre of Old Ontario—what is it that impresses itself on the keen business man, whose factory is rented by the square foot? Thousands of acres that are barely paying taxes. They are not so because of being created incapable of production nor because of a curse. True, an odd acre here and there is covered with stone or on some other account is unworkable. These acres, happily, are not common, and if they were the only lands neglected Old Ontario would be no longer an importer of food products that she could raise. On the other hand, the export trade in these lines would exceed the present export business of the Dominion.

WHILE factories expand and cities grow, increasing the multitudes dependent on the farmer for their feed, the cost of living must go on increasing unless some change comes into effect.

Where is the root of the trouble? Poor railway facilities, monopolies, extravagance and so forth are blamable to a certain extent, but no farther. They do not take away the productiveness of earth, nor do they hinder larger crops, nor hamper proper scientific cultivation, nor do they prevent great stretches of land from being cultivated at all. These are the

points that govern production, and production governs prices. An acre properly cultivated is better than a section of land that eats up its yield in paying wages, buying implements and feeding the horses whose sole object in life is to work its acres. The man with a back yard garden often reaps more net profit out of his spare moments than the farmer who spends his whole time labouring from early till late trying to do the work of half a dozen men and fretting because he has not another hundred acres to till in the same unscientific and unprofitable manner.

TOO many acres, lack of scientific knowledge, shortage of labour and distance from market are the evils that play havoc with the farmer and shoot up the cost of living.

Too many acres? Yes, in many cases it's the distance from one boundary fence to the other that keeps the farmer poor. Acres never made any one rich. It's what they yield, whether crops or rent, that supplies the necessities of life. Government reports, to say nothing of personal observations, show that the small acreages far exceed the large areas in dividends.

Even in these perilous times when millions of men defending our country are added to those dependent on the farmer for food, there is land lying in idle-

TWO WAYS OF WAR

Still the steady stream of German prisoners in the region of Thiepval.



You conjecture by the snap and sparkle of this group that they are Canadians. They have just been relieved of trench duty for a while and are going to billets.

ness—not in the far west nor in Northern Ontario, where tillers of the soil have not yet found their way, but in Central Ontario. Farms which at one time yielded valuable crops and were treasured by their occupants, are to-day deserted. Two and a half hours' run east from Toronto there is a strip of country several miles in length and nearly as broad which was dotted here and there with churches and schools forty years ago. The land, when transferred from vendors to purchaser, was always at a high figure. A tragic change has come over this section. The treasured land which promised abundance in return for proper cultivation now presents a picture of poverty and despair. No longer are the churches well attended and the schools filled with happy children. There has been an exodus. The churches have lost their worshippers and sunken into decay. Only one or two remain, and they hold services only occasionally. Of the schools there is only one left. When it opened, on September 4th, after the summer vacation, only three boys and one little girl appeared to fill the seats that at one time could not accommodate the sturdy country scholars. Farms in every direction, practically every one as a matter of fact, have long since been sold for a few dollars an acre, swallowed up by mortgages or taken for taxes.

Now that this strip of land is covered with desolation, some folk say that it should never have been deforested. Yet these same people admit frankly that years ago this soil yielded rich crops. Its productiveness, they say, was at one time a well attested fact. A few say that its present bareness is the work of God. Surely the God revealed by nature—by the very piece of country itself—is not a god as these strange thinking men and women imagine. He who created it in its richness has surely not repented and taken away its power. The agricultural college reports that the soil is especially adapted to the cultivation of fruits and vegetables. As for chicken farms nothing better could be desired.

Forty years ago Toronto was a long way off. Montreal was farther away. Small fruits and vegetables were hard to convey to these points, the big markets. Strawberries and other small fruits would have perished during transit. To cover his land with a crop the farmer sowed grain. He failed to properly nourish the ground, and soon the top soil was starved. Scientific knowledge of agriculture was not within reach of every farmer in those days. Along came some strangers, and not knowing how to treat the land, plowed too deeply and rooted up the subsoil of sand. Then came a wind and by degrees swept the uprooted sand over an acre or two, and from there to an adjoining farm until now the district is known as the "sand plains." Farms are cheap there to-day. Pioneers had to take up this land because the farmers nearer the large markets wanted big acreages. Just like to-day, the new-comer had to go farther back. Too many acres spoiled the farm, the farmer, and raised the cost of living. Modern methods are working on exactly the same method. The aggressive newcomer, who wants land, is presented with dazing literature of golden opportunities in some almost unknown part—away from markets—away from conveniences that go to make life what it should be—away where years must be spent in clearing the land before its virgin soil is broken—away back where long freight charges depreciate the farmer's product or add to the cost of living by calling on the consumer to pay the additional cost. Not that the land in out of the way places is not rich and that it does not merit tillers' attention. Where the populace is production should naturally take place. The market is the paying teller for the farmer—it's there where the folk are dependent on the farmer, and the closer the producer is to that point the cheaper his produce can be sold.

THE factory that operates under methods of forty years ago soon finds its way into the hands of creditors. With the farmer it is slightly different. He gradually dwindles and while he sinks his big farm fails to produce what it should—what the people demand of it. The farm and the farmer go hand in hand—they sink together. Eventually the run-down farm is left to its fate or taken over by another tiller, who perhaps sees beyond the passing moment, and begins to build up the land where the former owner left off his destructive work. In a short time the fertility is reclaimed and again the farm yields dividend crops. Whole districts, the student of agriculture tells us, can be reclaimed, just as the one mentioned above could be brought back to its former richness.

The British farmer is said to feed forty-five to fifty persons. The German farmer from the same area of inferior soil is reported to feed from seventy to seventy-five people. The Ontario farmer

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