



The Cheapest Labor is Costly When Used This Way

When Debt is a Blessing

By E. L. McCaskey

MY model farmer is not in debt. He is an independent man, living on his own acres, with a farm thoroughly improved, and owing no man. The model farmer has capital enough of his own to finance his own operations. He is not at the mercy of the banker. But there are many stages between the first attempt of the young man and the ownership of his model farm; and the fare over a part of that journey may be paid with borrowed money. There are cases when debt may be a blessing.

I well remember the first time I was ever in debt. Like most farm boys I had worked until I was well on to the end of my teens for board and clothes and the privilege of attending school. I had no capital. I had no experience in any special line and could not have drawn more than a hired man's wages, say \$25 a month and board. I had the choice of working several years and saving enough money to go to college, or of borrowing the money from a kindly relative, going immediately to college, and paying back the debt at the conclusion of my college course. After carefully weighing the pros and cons of the situation, I borrowed the money and went through college on what I could earn in vacations, borrowing the rest from my relative.

I have never regretted that course. At the conclusion of my college course I was in a position to demand a good salary for my services, and I paid back the entire debt in a little over one year. I was years ahead by going into debt.

Progress on Borrowed Capital

I did not start out, however, to give a history of my own personal experiences. Here is another case that illustrates the same point. In my own home neighborhood are two farms side by side. They are good farms. They were handed on by the old people who had originally owned them to their respective sons at about the same time. Both farms were owned free of debt. Neither of the young men who thus started out had any working capital. Both appeared to have about equal ability.

The first is a good farmer, but very conservative. His whole object from the first has been to keep out of debt. He has worked along with poor stock, and as new and improved machinery has come out, he has not purchased it until he had money enough ahead to pay for it on the spot. Consequently his progress as a farmer has been very slow.

The second young man was a better business head, as subsequent events proved. He saw that he was hampered by lack of capital. He rea-

soned that money invested in better stock, needed implements, and other improvements would bring in greater returns than money invested in land. He mortgaged his farm for \$1,000, made his necessary improvements, greatly increased his income, and is now my model of a farmer. He has no debts to pay, because he is out of debt. He has a farm equipped in a way that makes it an earner of a maximum income for himself and family.

This young man has got on in the world because he had the courage to go into debt.

I am not advising all farmers who lack capital to go into debt. Some have not the business ability to use money wisely, and for such the old conservative method of keeping out of debt at all costs is probably the better one. Such a man, however, can never hope to be anything more than a plodder. I believe that any man with business ability can afford to risk at least 10 per cent. of the value of his farm on a mortgage in order to secure capital. For instance, a man with a \$6,000 farm and no working capital can well afford to mortgage for \$600 in order to get a start.

I believe that one of the weaknesses of farming as a business is that too much money is tied up in that least productive of all investments, agricultural land. We need more loose capital available for business purposes.

Those Who Think

I AM firmly convinced that no man is better qualified to solve our everyday problems than the farmer. I would be perfectly content to leave any question to a referendum vote participated in by none other than farmers.

If you will think a minute you will realize that the farmer is thus equipped, or qualified, by the very nature of his daily work. He must decide new questions of farming every day.

The average city man goes to work in the morning to factory, store, mill or office. There is a foreman, manager, superintendent or some sort of "boss" to outline and explain what he is to do; he is set to work running some machine; he is put to selling some one line of goods; he is entrusted with some one particular task.

If a new situation arises there is the "boss" near by to decide the matter, to tell him what to do.—Jas. M. Pierce, in Iowa Homestead.

An Ice Box for the Women

By E. L. McCaskey

ONE of my brother farmers, one who is right up-to-date on his farm, is building an ice house. During the past summer he has had a couple of batches of milk returned from the factory, and I supposed that the ice house was intended only to eliminate such losses in future. When calling on him a day or two ago, to arrange for the drawing of milk this winter, I remarked on the ice house. "No bad milk next summer," I suggested.

"Perhaps not," he assented, "but that wasn't my main object in building this ice house. I am putting it up for the convenience of the women folk. I was just thinking it over the other evening as I watched the wife busting around clearing things away after supper. I began to see that while I had been riding the plow and the cultivator and looking forward to the day when every implement on the farm would have a spring seat on it, that my good wife had been trotting up and down cellar with everything that would spoil if not left in a cool place, down to the spring house with the butter and milk and doing all the other hard jobs in the old-time way. In fact, while I have been making the horses or the hired man do my hard work, she has had her burdens added to it if anything. Yes, this ice house is for her."

Many Steps Saved

That struck me as good reasoning. In the new order of things on that farm there is to be an ice box, one of the same kind that we see on the back porch of the up-to-date city home, only on somewhat larger proportions. Into this ice box everything perishable can be easily stored without a trip down cellar or over to the distant spring. The outlay will not be so great either, as the plan my friend has adopted is simplicity itself. The building is a simple frame shack, about 10 feet square and eight or nine feet to the eaves with an A roof. On the floor he dumped about eight inches of coarse gravel for drainage. The insulation for the ice will be provided by packing well with about 12 inches of sod next the walls and half as much again on the floor and on top.

"There'll be lots of time to fill the ice house this winter," said this man of new ideas, as he regarded his work with satisfaction. "I don't know whether we will be able to rihg the hired man in to keep the ice box supplied, but supplied it must be, and mother will have it easier."



The High Price of Labor has no Terrors under this Management

The increasing cost of farm labor has been accompanied by a still more rapid increase in the efficiency of farm machinery. Whether or not we can afford to pay present-day wages depends largely on whether or not we have adopted present-day labor economizing implements and methods.