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THE FURROW *at the* FRONT DOOR

WHAT concerns the greatest good to the greatest number just now is the furrow that stops at the front door.

What this country needs above all things is the man who will rip off his clothes that cost \$100 and put on duds that cost \$4.60, including the "cow-bite" hat and the braces.

About 4,000,000 people in Canada—counting children—have been deluded into the belief that they don't need furrows. Canadian cities contain the best part of a million people who were born on or very close to Lot X, Concession Y, Tp. of Z. What amazes some of us is the fact that a lot of men we meet in town never admit that they know anything about a barnyard until they get into a quiet corner at the club, where Sir Thingumbob won't hear them. And when they come to find out, Sir Thingumbob was born on a farm, and in his young days pitched manure in a real slimy barnyard. Admit it? All depends on the company. If it's farmers, and he wants votes—oh, yes. But if he wants to talk sociology, high-brow politics and art, the ancestral barnyard is taboo.

Nine-tenths of the men who read this paper live in places that enable them to escape town-ship taxes by paying higher ones. Most of us wear collars every day, shave every other morning, ride to work in a street car, and bunco ourselves into believing that a backyard dump can always be made into a garden. The reason for our continued existence as many miles as possible from the nearest furrow is that we may pay the grocer, the butcher and the landlord. This kind of life was born with some of us. Others had it thrust upon them. And a large number chose it in preference to owning or operating a farm.

A lot of people's fathers left the farm in this country. It used to be all the fashion. The farms of Ontario were overstocked with boys; too much help for the work there was to do. So, by thousands, the boys got out. Some of them are doing it still. Toronto contains a large number of farmers' sons who should be man-powered out by the coming census, back to the land. These men were lured by high wages. If the Government expects to leave these able-bodied, highly-trained farm experts in the factories, and send out raw recruits from town to take their places at a sacrifice of revenue, there will be a humbug.

There are three main reasons why anybody ever left a farm in Canada:
Ambition; Pleasure; Economics.

NOW, the ambition of a lot of misinformed people is to own a farm and get rid of water-rates; the pleasures of town life are a subject of argument; and the economies of living in town are in the category of exploded ideals.

The retired farmer goes to town to spend his declining years and his accumulating money; and the tired business man who has made money selling town lots to other people before he paid for them himself goes out and buys the farmer's farm, which he either chalks up for a future subdivision or at once converts into a pleasure park costing about \$50,000, and classified as a model farm. These are the big-interest farmers, town-born, who have large red barns, herds of Jersey cows and squads of automobiles; who, when the time comes, will have flotillas of airships. But the nearest these nabobs ever get to negligence is a suit of linen and a soft shirt, a pair of white boots and white duck pantaloons. You can't talk pitchforks to these people without ringing in economics, overhead—all that stuff—transportation, average acre-cost, tabulated charges, etc., topped off with another cup of polite two and a half per cent. tea on the piazza. They keep the front door, even on the farm, a long way from the furrow; and if a real farmer should upset a load of hay across the sidewalk at the front gate in the city they would straightway call the police.

What we are after just now in this country is the man who will fetch the plough to the front door by himself going to the plough. The Government, through its census department, we suppose, is about to take a man-power census of Canada. When, we don't know. But it is supposed to be a man-power and not a popular census. It will make no difference in that census what Church father goes to, or where uncle was born, or how old is Ann. It will make all the difference what percentage of the people—especially males—can be pried away as much as possible from the jobs they are holding down to other jobs that they can hold up.

FIRST of a series of farm articles written from the town angle, intended to interest townspeople in the plain, obvious facts of farming. Any man who thinks he is likely to be taken by the man-power census will find this series of farm-talks a stimulus to his advance towards the ranks of the pitchfork brigade.



By AUGUSTUS BRIDLE

other vegetables until the stocks were used up and for making a large number of men think they were too busy raising three bags of potatoes to spare time for helping a born farmer haul in his crop.

Without a doubt, backyard and vacant lot tillage increased production in 1917. It augmented the actual amount of vegetables grown. It employed labor that otherwise might have been idle. The economic idea in 1917 was not the cost, but the result. People were afraid of vegetable-scarcity—at any price. The vacant-lot campaign overcame some of the scarcity, and for a time actually kept down the price. What it did not do was to determine the cost of production as compared with the results; the cost particularly in labor, which might have been utilized at greater production.

A BETTER census is needed in 1918. The first charge on the labor-inventory of the country must be the farm. An able-bodied man can produce ten times as much on a farm as he can in a backyard. There is not work enough in an average backyard to occupy one man much of his spare time. One man can look after half a dozen back lots. One girl can do much.

The important thing is to release as much labor as possible for the farm. The furrow must be brought up to the front door. Those who hate the idea of farming will need to get over it. The fact that a man farmed once and is now past middle age is no bar. A man who has never farmed has no excuse for not wanting to learn right away. The whole of Canada is one huge farm. No man's front door can escape the furrow. No town can afford to shut itself up away from the land. The call of the land must be heard—and answered. The Government has as much right to organize the people for production as it has to require men for war under the Military Service Act. Food is the first of all essentials. If we are to escape the full effects of a world-scarcity, if not a world-famine, in cereals, vegetables, and fruit as well as in meat, every man and woman in Canada who can be spared for a term of weeks this season to get crops in and crops off should be requisitioned by the Government through all possible existing agencies. No M. S. A. reject, turned down because of a slight ailment or defect, should hide behind a snug job, looking busy when he is mainly concerned with wearing high-cost clothes and keeping himself amused in his hours of leisure. No retired farmer with lumbago should hang around his town house and be a slacker. No cigarette fan should escape the pitchfork. And the country should not be bamboozled by tales of vast hordes of available labor.

Hordes of labor are not available. The army of adequate labor is already encamped in a thousand cities and towns. How much of every town's non-productive population not qualified for war and not necessary for munition-making can be got for the land-labor, is for existing agencies to discover. There are such agencies. Municipal councils, boards of trade, school boards, manufacturers' associations, labor unions, farmers' unions, are all more or less able

Where are these people whose occupations can be so interrupted? In the towns. The farmer wants them. He is lying in wait. He has a large tract of land hungering for more boots. The country wants them. The country needs producers. Many of the jobs that a lot of townspeople have do not produce. They only distribute or regulate. Our main business for a good while to come will be to get as much food, clothes and comforts as can be to the greatest number of people, who, in turn, are supposed to produce every bushel and pound they can pile up for export to men at the front who are thousands of miles from the main bases of supply.

In this business of getting the necessities of life to ourselves, and the necessities of both life and death to the men at the front, we shall need every foot-pound of energy the country has, occupied in places where it will waste itself least. Wasted labor is as bad as wasted food.

Now, 1917 taught us a little. But the land-slackers of 1917 were a large army.

1917, after two years working up to it by production campaigns in the press, taught thousands of us to buy spades, hoes and Paris green, and sow carrots for borders. The backyard garden idea was responsible for diverting a heap of money into seed potatoes at \$1.25 a peck, and a heap of labor into potatoes that sold for a dollar a bag. It was responsible for keeping down the local prices of potatoes and