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Increasing the Supply of Land

A Few Practical Ways in Which the Quantity of Tillable Material May Be Increased

Is the amount of land in the world a fixed quantity? "How absurd!" one may be tempted to exclaim. "Of course you may dyke here and drain there, and turn a little stretch of water into land, but what does that amount to? For all practical purposes, certainly the amount of land in the world is fixed."

But it is precisely for practical purposes that it is not fixed. Thirty years ago vast areas in Western Canada for all the good they were, might as well have been on another planet, simply because there were no means of bringing to a market the crops, which they were capable of producing. The development of transportation facilities has made these lands accessible and has thus, for practical purposes, increased the supply of land in the world.

Land, *i. e.* available land, can, however, be increased in other ways. We cannot perform miracles and add to its area, but it is important to remember that area is not the only quality we regard in considering the worth of land. Though an acre is a measure of surface, we assuredly do not think merely of its length and breadth, without regard to its thickness, *i. e.* the depth of soil. If, by deep cultivation, we bring untouched layers into use, we have again, for practical purposes, increased the supply of land.

Moreover, we cannot think of the value of land in terms of its quantity merely, without regard to its quality. When we purchase a farm we require not simply a volume of soil with a certain cubic content, but soil possessing certain valuable physical and chemical properties. If we defined accurately what we mean by the "land" we are buying, we should certainly include these properties, and their impairment through poor methods of tillage is a direct loss of the commodity we have paid good money for. On the other hand, we may increase its amount by intensive cultivation, which, again, is another and most important way of augmenting, for practical purposes, the supply of land.

A Slum Home in Western Canada

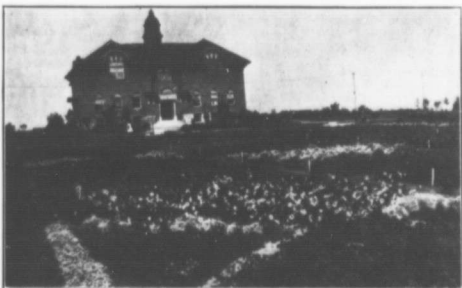


(Cut No. 29)

Here is a photo of a "home" which is almost in the centre of one of the smaller cities of Western Canada. It is occupied by a young German immigrant with his wife and six children. It is situated at the rear of a row of houses and was, at one time, used for a stable. The surroundings of the place are filthy in the extreme. An outdoor closet stands within ten feet of the end of the building, and others can be seen at short intervals all along the fence. Not more than ten feet from the house a stagnant pool of water is used as a duck-pond. The odor is indescribable. There are but two windows in the lower portion of the building so that it is dark and ill ventilated. Old pieces

of carpet, hung as curtains, add to the gloom. The "upstairs" is reached by means of a ladder placed at the end of the building, and is entered through the combined door and window in the gable. This little, sloping, garret-like room is used for sleeping quarters. The place swarms with flies.

Is it any wonder that typhoid is much more prevalent than it should be in that city? Again, is it not rather a paradox that we should insist on our immigrants being healthy when they reach our shores, and then permit them to live themselves in dwellings where healthy, decent living is impossible!—A.D.



(Cut No. 30)

This picture represents a beautiful school garden in the Province of Quebec. Modern educationists realize that the training of the young should not be confined to books. Work in the open air is not only healthful, but stimulates the children's interest in Nature's wonderful life processes.

Open Markets Cheaper Goods

A burning topic of today, is the "high cost of living." While many reasons are cited for the existing high prices of food stuffs, there are many ways in which the dwellers in towns and cities may economize in purchasing supplies for the table. The majority of city dwellers today draw upon the whole world for their food supply and buy from the retail dealer. The telephone and delivery wagon entrench him in his position. Hence comes the difficulty often encountered in maintaining a public market in many of our towns and cities.

A study of the whole subject of the public market leads to the conclusion that it is much more advantageous to the city consumer than to the progressive farmer, though there are certain advantages for the latter, such as the building up of a reputation for certain specialties, the placing of a premium upon excellence, and receiving better prices than could be obtained from local retailers. The city consumer gets the products fresh from the farm; and at much more reasonable prices than might be charged by the retailer if there were no local market. Various investigations have shown that in some of our cities, certain staples cost two or three times as much as the farmers received for these products. A recent investigation in a Canadian city of upwards of 100,000 population showed that in no case was the scale of prices of the retailer for farm products as low as that on the public market, and, in some commodities, the price was about double. While there are many city residents who cannot get to the public market to buy, there are many who can, but who are not patronizing it. The difference in cost would pay handsomely. The custom of going to market is as old as city life itself, and as honourable as it is old.

Where a public market has been opened in a town in which it had not hitherto existed, prices to the consumer have been lowered. In towns where they have been allowed to go out of existence, prices have gone up. Markets should be wholly for the use of the farmer and not dominated by hucksters.—F. C. N.