

IMPORTANCE AND PROGRESS OF SCIENTIFIC AGRICULTURE

The decreasing proportion of effort required to secure adequate food supplies in those sections of the world where scientific methods in agriculture are the most generally followed is among the most impressive trends in modern times.

This trend has been noticeable for some time as we have the authority of a comparatively recent history of Rome⁽¹⁾ for the claim that it required eighty per cent of the income of the married labouring man to secure the necessities of life in the time of Cicero. Scarcely more than a century since it is pointed out by Thorold Rogers in his "Six Centuries of Work and Wages" that it required fairly regular employment for the agricultural labourer in Britain at the weekly wage recorded to secure necessities. The approach to the Napoleonic war period of high food prices finds the weekly employment lengthened until finally fifty-two weeks of the year are insufficient. The hiatus is overcome by the statement that it is hard to understand how existence was achieved during this period of high prices.

During the present century the advance has been more rapid and figures are available for measuring that advance. The Dominion Bureau of Statistics provides these figures --

(1) Frank, T. An Economic History of Rome, 1920, p. 337.