

can do, but who is to set out a cast-iron table of human limitation? Napoleon said he "trampled on impossibilities," and while even he fooled himself, he did things in his saner moments that the complete coalition of his own day

that crop off the fields and into stack or storage in time.

Whether it is or is not detrimental to the crop, no one contemplates with satisfaction the idea of his stooks remaining in the field all winter. Many thous-



One man and two horses twenty years ago

couldn't or wouldn't attempt. What "impossibilities" have been got rid of within the past three years—since the war started? Had we prophesied in these pages some of the things which have been done in that brief interval by the soft hands and indomitable spirit of our women folk alone, we would have lost the support of our last subscriber.

At this point of time pretty well all the seed grain and other soil products have gone into the soil that can be put in for a 1917 harvest. Human skill can do little more than it has done till the grain fields are ready to cut, but we are concerned not with this year's harvest alone but with the crops of many years to come.

But for the moment we think of the crop that is now sprouting on the prairies and ask ourselves whether we can reasonably see our way to harvest that crop, thresh and get it to market without any waste or delay that human foresight can prevent or the rapacity of unscrupulous dealers and politicians can create.

It would seem that in spite of all precautions and efforts that when it comes to harvesting the 1917 crop, the one monumental obstacle will be the shortage of labor. It is all very well to talk of this make-shift and the other, but the point of it all is in getting

ands of acres of unthreshed grain were exposed in this way during the past two winters, just because it was impossible to obtain the labor necessary to cut and thresh it before it was snow and frost bound.

The outlook certainly points in the most impressive way to the necessity of securing in time every labor-saving piece of machinery that can be employed on the great in-gathering. In these days there's a stack of money in free circulation in western Canada, such as probably never existed at the most rosy point of the past. The very best use to which a great part of that money could now be devoted would be in the purchase of farm machinery.

This is not a thinly disguised boost for the manufacturer of farm implements but an earnest attempt to arouse men's minds to the fact that even under normal conditions unaided human labor is no longer equal to the task of covering the ground in time. The "ground" has become so vast, the hungry mouths have so tremendously multiplied, and the human ranks engaged in the business of covering that ground and feeding those multitudes have been so depleted, there can be no relief to the situation outside of mechanical power.

This plain piece of first hand evidence has at last found a lodgment in the brain of phlegmatic old John Bull. For the immediate needs of his own household he has been making or importing gas tractors and all manner of agricultural tools in immense quantities and as fast as the exigencies of war will enable him to get them. Throughout the whole seeding season, night in England and some parts of rural Scotland has been turned into day by the relief shifts with high-powered luminants, plowing the fields and game preserves that have been "preserved" as such for centuries.

Here in Canada, "The Bread Basket of the World," we have not been so busy. The thing hasn't come home in the same way because we are not feeling it in the region of the stomach—as they are beginning to realize it in Europe. We have been dividing our time between politics (that is the politicians have) and getting in on the ammunition deal in that part of the organization which concerns the machinery manufacturer.

The 1916 crop in hand at country elevators or "visible" somewhere else, the prices which have been chalked up from day

This, of course, is the general aspect but there is to it not a few honorable exceptions.

The effect is that from one excuse or another, the wheat area for 1917 will be somewhat short of 1916 instead of being very greatly increased—as it could easily have been, while the acreage sown to coarse grains is slightly above that of last year's figures is very far short of what it ought to have been.

Were there no war; were it not our first business to provide for the men (and their dependents) who are fighting and dying to preserve our lives and our homesteads; were there no unusual food shortage in Europe (which is our one market after our own maws have been filled), we would still stand on a pedestal of humiliation with our "Bread Basket of the World!"

Is there any more insufferable neighbor than the habitual blow-hard? And yet what else is Johnny Canuck in the eyes of the world if the world is to measure him up by this finely printed government broadside as compared with his actual deliveries in the open market. True, when the sum total of these deliveries is regarded by itself it makes a



One man and the power of 40 horses to-day

to day on the blackboards of the wheat pits have kept the nerves of the farmer on the jump or lulled him (according to his disposition) into a comfortable sleep of satisfaction and a glorious frame of indifference to the distant if not immediate future.

rather impressive column of figures, but when comparisons are made with what the rest of the world is doing in "bread basketry" and how little Johnny is delivering according to his means, there's nothing left to blow about. The folks across the line have

