

Most Serious Shortage Of Labor For Farms

Alarming Drift of Rural Population to Cities May
Result in Lowered Production and Higher
Prices

(Edward Owen Dean in N. Y. Evening Post.)
Not so long ago the post office department announced that answers to a questionnaire sent out among the farmers revealed a widespread spirit of unrest and dissatisfaction, so threatening as likely to disturb seriously the country's economic structure. Commenting on the questionnaire, an official of the post office department said:
"As many as 80 per cent of the replies indicate that the writers contemplate either leaving their farms or curtailing acreage under cultivation because of one or more of three major grievances and because of a growing feeling against non-producing city dwellers. Such a condition at a time when the predominant cry is for production cannot but constitute a grave menace."
The principal reason the farmers gave as the cause of dissatisfaction was "inability to obtain labor to work the farms. Lured help and the farmers' children having been lured to the city by the higher wages and easier living. The other two reasons were big profits of the middlemen and lack of proper agencies for more direct contact between the producers and the ultimate consumers."
Shortage of Food Predicted.
The farm journals are probably closer to the farmers than even the various state and federal agencies. A large number of the editors of these publications are engaged actively in farm operations themselves.
"There can be no question about the shortage of food that is due for next winter," says the Rural New Yorker. "The situation is worse in some respects than during the war. At that time most people were willing to save and eat plain food. How many that you know are still eating 'war bread'? How many practicing economies? With the high wages prevailing in town there has come a practice of extravagant buying and waste. Yet there are fewer farm workers and fewer cultivated acres than during the war. Should this coming season prove too wet or develop a severe drought there will be serious trouble next winter."
"On April 1 the price of milk was cut to a figure 12 per cent less than that of a year ago. At the same time, as compared with one year ago, hay had increased 50 per cent, feed nearly 25 per cent, and there had also been an average increase of at least 25 per cent in labor cost and in general supplies."
Recently the United States department of agriculture conducted an inquiry to determine, in so far as it was possible, the farm situation for this year. One fact stands forth quite clearly—there will be a decreased planting acreage, due in large measure to the high wages demanded by farm labor. It is too early yet to state with any degree of accuracy the extent of this curtailment, but that it will be considerable is indicated from information reaching the department from many sources. Because of this retrenchment in farm operations, Secretary Meredith declares that the nation is in great danger of a food shortage, and he is exerting himself to bring about conditions whereby the farmers shall receive "fair compensation for their efforts" and at the same time cut down the prices to the consumers.
"The cost of distribution must be lowered," says Mr. Meredith; "it must be simplified. To pay 50 per cent of the amount received for an article is too much. It means that the farmer receives too little and the consumer pays too much. Farming must be made remunerative in a way it has not been in the past. The high cost of living has forced it to the front. If it is not solved satisfactorily there will be less and less farm produce to divide among the whole people and higher and higher will go the prices of that which is produced, constituting a serious menace to our welfare."

Farmers Not Getting Rich.
Most city people have a notion that the farmers are making more money than they know what to do with. There is no question that they did exceptionally well in 1918, because war prices of farm products advanced faster than the elements of cost, but according to Secretary Meredith, "in 1919 the advance in elements of cost overtook and passed the advance in prices received and the average farmer did not make large profits, not even fair wages when the work of other members of the family is taken into consideration."
A letter from an Ulster County farmer to the Rural New Yorker is typical of the complaints pouring in. "Many farmers in this section are planning to cut down expenses, even at the cost of lowering production. Having a small acreage myself, partly in fruit, I shall plant only what can be handled alone, and if I cannot balance up with a reasonable fee per day. We farmers cannot afford to produce for others to live in luxury while we ourselves labor and plant and buy without receiving living wages."

Another correspondent draws a rather gloomy picture of the conditions in Ohio.

"There is no disguising the fact that Northern Ohio is participating in the 'rural unrest' that seems so general everywhere. Auction sales are just common events now. Sales bills are displayed from every vantage point, and about every bill announces the sale in entirety of all farm stock, implements and chattels without reserve."
This selling of entire dairies and their dispersal is the serious thing to which should be added the private sale of a few cows here and there, this last because the dairymen are 'contracting' their business because of lack of help and increasing expenses, so that a ton of milk will not buy a ton of feed. They are going to do just what they can, for the help cannot be had."
How the exodus of labor to city factories has brought a crisis to the farm is very forcefully set forth in a recent article in The Country Gentleman, by Harry R. O'Brien, who visited many States, attended many agricultural meetings and talked with many individual farmers.
"This country is up against a crisis in regard to the situation on the farms," writes Mr. O'Brien. "I am not doing any calamity howling. I am stating a plain fact. As the crisis of the whole matter centers round the farmhand—the erstwhile farmhand today is running a lathe or shovelling coal or hammering rivets instead of ploughing for corn or feeding hogs."
I have talked with corn and hog farmers in Iowa, with tobacco farmers in Kentucky, with dairymen in Ohio, with bean, potato and sugar men in Michigan, with farm bureau officials with county agents, with men I met on trains—everywhere I heard the same story: the farm hand had gone to town.

"What is to be done about it? How are the farmers going to keep their present help or get back their hired hands who have gone off to the cities? 'Make farm crops and farm food more profitable to the man who produces these things,' say the people of the whole nation that we can't furnish food to them under present conditions."
"Farming a Man's-Sized Job?"
"We can't afford to pay men factory wages out here on the farm and feed them, too," said a neighbor of mine, a dairyman in Central Connecticut. "The farmer of today is a specialist. There used to be a time when the farmer produced nearly everything he consumed but now we have to buy many things ourselves, and it costs us a lot of money to feed a farm hand. And what help an able to get is of a mighty poor quality, unreliable, shiftless and lazy. After a good many years of experience with these fellows, I found out that instead of the hired men working for me, I was working for them, and I have cut down the farm activities to what my son and myself can do."

"What is your opinion of the outlook?" I asked.
"I see no immediate remedy, and there will not likely be any until the people are stirred into recognition of the fact that the production of food is a more important industry than the manufacture of expensive ornaments."
"Another thing: Impress upon the city people that farming is a man's-sized job. Women and boys and clerks on vacations are not of much consequence. I hate to shatter a pretty delusion. They have been of some help, of course. We want men, experienced men, and we will pay them to the limit of our financial ability."

FRANCE AND COMMON SCHOOL EDUCATION
Economic and Social Problems to Be Studied—"Love and Justice" Taught.

France is making preparation to bring her system of common school education up to date. The contention is made that inadequate attention has been paid to instruction in real life. The present system is derided as antiquated, misleading and sometimes productive of more harm than good. In a leading article the Journal des Debats says: "What would we think of a farmer who tried to cultivate the soil with a mediæval pick and shovel? What would be our opinion of a weaver who would supply his employees with distaffs such as our ancestors used? And yet in education we go on the false assumption that man has not changed and that the type of instruction vague a century ago suits the needs of today. Nothing could be farther from the truth."
There is to be no let-down in theoretical work. But the time devoted to instruction in practical affairs is to be greatly increased, or, according to one French paper, the setting aside of a certain amount of time for the study of real, live questions is to have its debut in French schools. The scheme was tried out first in the Bossuet School in Paris and met, it seems, with unexpected success. The pupils were surprised

to hear that familiarity with the problems of economic and social life also constituted a part of a liberal education. They are being impressed with the fact that the problems of life are more complicated than ever, that they cannot live as did their fathers before them, that they must know something about the issues of the day before they can go into business for themselves or be employed by others.
Under the caption, "Education Nouvelle," a vigorous campaign is being conducted by Je Sais Tout in favor of even broader reforms. Its motto is: "Education for All Classes in the Same School."

The end to be attained is the training of the whole man with especial reference to his moral and physical development. Particular stress is laid on the "education of the intelligence" by means of motion pictures, with which it is argued each school should be equipped, by visits to commercial houses, business centres and the fields while the crops are being sown and harvested. The study of foreign languages is strongly recommended and the "old bore" literature conferred for the acquiring of a lot of useless and undigested information" in condemned outright. Its suppression is urged. Specialization, it is asserted, should begin with the sixteenth year.

MIRAMICHI PERSONALS.
(Chatham World.)
Miss Grace McKenzie, R. N., of Boston is visiting her mother, Mrs. Helen McKenzie, Douglastown.
Mrs. W. A. Hickson and Miss Hickson, who have been spending the last six months in Hamilton, Bermuda, have returned to their home in Newcastle.
Mrs. Wm. Aitken and Miss Laura Aitken are in Montreal en route home from Camden, S. C., where they have been spending the winter months, and are expected to arrive in Newcastle shortly.
Mrs. John Robinson left Newcastle Sunday for Montreal to enter Royal Victoria Hospital for treatment. Her husband and daughter, Miss Molly, accompanied her.
Miss Clare Creighton has returned to Newcastle from a trip to friends in Montreal and Toronto.
Mr. and Mrs. F. Arthur Mackenzie left on Thursday by automobile for

Scranton, Pa., to visit Mrs. Mackenzie's mother.
Broadway Smile Broken.
New York, June 10.—"Mammy" Chappelle, Broadway's famous "man w/ never frowns," formerly one of the best known figures along the white way, in the Riverside Sanatorium. Word over a divorce suit and for alleviation of affections are said to have taken away the smile. "Mammy" was one of the best known champagne salesmen in the city.

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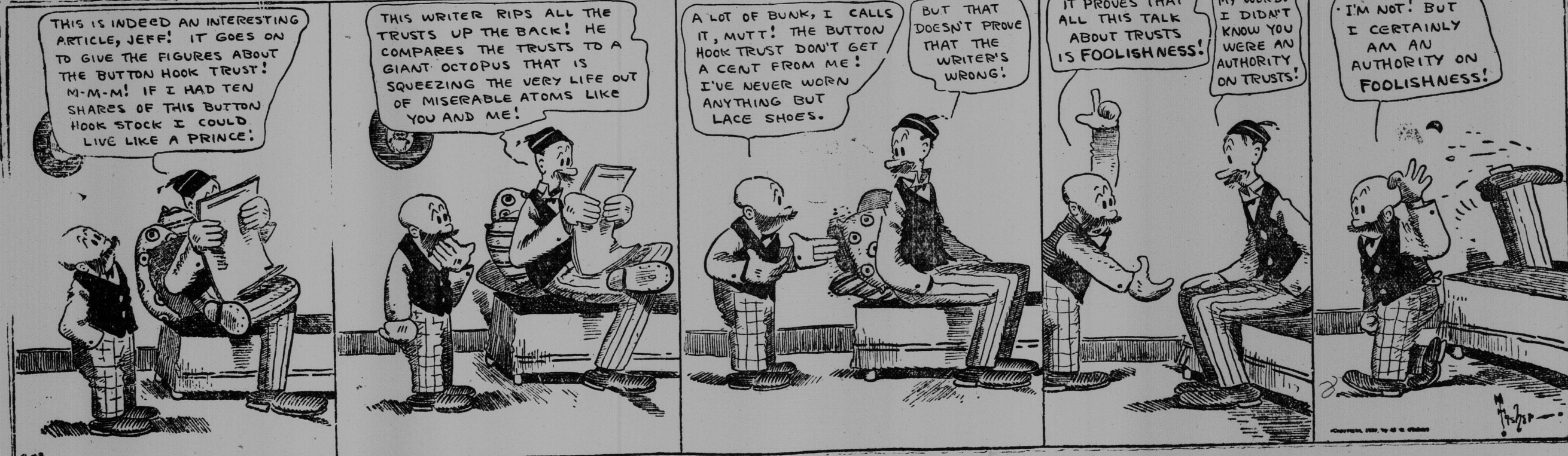
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By "BUD" FISHER