

Farmers Are Still Laboring Under Serious Disadvantage

There Is Food In Superabundance, Says Secretary Wallace, Contributes to General Prosperity of Business, But Gives Inadequate Return to the Farmer.

Washington, Dec. 4.—American farmers, complaining about one-third of the country's population, find themselves, notwithstanding their hard work and large production this year, still laboring under a serious disadvantage as compared with other groups of workers because of the disproportionate relationship of prices, Secretary Wallace of the department of agriculture told President Harding and Congress today in his annual report.

"There is food in superabundance," Mr. Wallace said, "and this contributes to the prosperity of business and industry for a time, but the inadequate return which the farmer is receiving, and has for three years, inevitably must result in readjustments in the number of people on the farms and in the cities, which

months to three years. Creation of a new bureau of home economics was urged by the secretary, to enable the department to extend its efforts toward better economic systems in the rural community.

Another problem requiring immediate attention, the secretary said, was "the necessity of working out and applying a comprehensive plan of protecting, re-growing and utilizing our forests." He declared forest legislation should be enacted extending federal co-operation to the states in the protection of forests, coordinating state and federal services in the growing and distribution of forest-planting material, extending purchase of timberland "as rapidly as the condition of the treasury will permit," and covering into national forests some areas now comprised by Indian reservations.

The secretary reported good progress in organization of the packers and stockyard administration and the grain futures administration, in the campaign against plant pests, and in the various other lines of service in which his department is interested.

This year would be a prosperous year for agriculture, and consequently a prosperous year for the nation, if the relationship of prices now was such as existed before the war, Secretary Wallace said. There has been some increase in prices

of farm products, but there has not been much improvement in the general relationship between the prices of the things the farmer produces and the things he buys.

Among the causes which contribute to the abnormal relationship of farm prices to the prices of other things, Secretary Wallace mentioned these:

Overproduction of many farm crops.

Continued high freight rates.

Maintenance of industrial wages at near war-time levels.

Economic depression and depreciated currency in European countries.

Interference with the efficient functioning of necessary industries.

Unreasonably high costs of distribution of some farm products.

"Some contend there is no such thing as overproduction of farm products as long as there are people in the world who suffer for food and clothing," said Secretary Wallace. "On the same line of reasoning it can be argued that the production of automobiles will be adequate until every man, woman and every boy and girl of high school age owns one. There is overproduction, as far as the producer is concerned, whenever the quantity produced can not be marketed at a price which will cover all costs and leave the producer enough to tempt him to continue production. And whenever there is such overproduction the output will be reduced either by conscious effort on the part of the producers or by the operation of economic laws which drive the less efficient producers out of business. The fact is that for three years in succession the farmers of the United States have produced more of some crops than could be sold at prices high enough to cover producing costs.

"It will never be possible for the farmers to relax their production to profitable demand with the nicety of the manufacturer, both because they can not control the elements which influence production and cannot estimate demand so closely. Neither will the farmers be able to organize as have the labor unions, and by rules and regulations and disciplinary measures compel obedience to policies adopted. They can, however, bring about a better adjustment of production to the needs and purchasing ability of possible customers, if they will perfect their organizations and call to their aid men skilled in interpreting conditions which influence supply and demand. Better adjustment of farm production is worth striving for. Both the farmers and the consuming public would be benefitted through more stable production and therefore more stable prices."

Picturing the plight of American farmers Secretary Wallace said the production records of this year furnish a vivid illustration of the vitality of American agriculture and of the courage and hopefulness of the American farmer.

"Certainly no other industry could have taken the losses agriculture has taken and maintain production," he said. "We have no evidence to show that any other group of workers would have taken the reduction in wages in the spirit in which the farmers have taken their reduction. Many thousands of farmers have not been able to weather the storm, notwithstanding their strenuous efforts. Thousands who purchased land during the period of high prices have been obliged to give up the struggle, let their land at the lowest price, and money they paid for it, and start anew. Many thousands of renters who had substantial savings invested in farm equipment and livestock have gone through the same experience and have lost everything."

There are some hopeful aspects to the situation notwithstanding the continued low purchasing power of farm products, Secretary Wallace pointed out.

"It is fair to say that in general the farmers of the United States are in a better position financially now than they were a year or eighteen months ago," he declared. "Farm products are selling at considerably higher prices, and it is estimated the aggregate value of the crops in the country this year is about \$1,250,000,000 more than last year. Considerable quantities of these crops will be sold at the increased value will not be wholly recovered by the farmer, but the bare fact that such a large increase in money will reach the farmers' pockets this year is most gratifying and reassuring."

"The advance in price of cotton has been most helpful throughout the cotton growing states. Considerably higher prices for wool, lambs, and sheep have resulted in pulling the sheep industry out of the slough of despair and setting it on its feet again. Right through the period of depression hogs have been selling at considerably higher prices relatively than corn. On the whole it has been a fairly satisfactory year for cattle feeders. Credit conditions have improved and interest rates have fallen.

"Another hopeful sign is the increasing willingness and desire of people engaged in industry, commerce and finance to help bring about a more favorable adjustment for the farmer. Such people are coming to realize more and more the menace to themselves in conditions so unfavorable to agriculture as those of the past three years. Their attitude toward the farmer has changed from that of a benevolent paternalism such as was so much in evidence during the 19 years preceding the war to a more sympathetic one. It is clearly that their own future is inseparably linked up with the farmer, and that in doing what they can to help him get on his feet again they are helping themselves as well."

In relation to the price of farm products at the farms and prices charged for farm products in the cities, Secretary Wallace said the cost of distribution remains high, notwithstanding frequent violent denunciations of profiteers in the cities. In part, this high cost of distribution, he declared, is caused by the multiplication of distributing agencies during the last six years, in part by the increase in rent, and supplies, but in larger part by the higher wages which employes in the distributing business have been able to maintain.

Taxes on farms in most farming states have more than doubled and is proving to be one of the most frequent subjects of complaint by farmers and during the next few years the whole question of taxation, Mr. Wallace said, will evidently receive considerable attention by thoughtful farmers.

THERE'S NO LIFE LIKE THAT OF THE FARMER!

Frank Parker Hears Dr. Van Dyke's Address and Then Suffers From Nostalgia.

FARMERS LIVE IN POETRY

(By Associated Press.)
Raleigh, Dec. 4.—"The average spotless city person depends upon artificial life for entertainment, but this is no life at all when compared with that of the farmer, who lives close to nature, can not be hired to sit up until 10 o'clock at night but is up at the crack of dawn to drink in the real beauty of a new day."

Frank Parker, agricultural statistician of the North Carolina and United States departments of agriculture, was speaking. He was here today—he said he was and had been since he heard Dr. Henry Van Dyke last week declare "There's no poetry without God," and describe nature's beauty.

Parker is "from the country." Somehow he could not get interested in the great mass of statistics on the desk in his usual manner. Finally, he shoved aside the papers and "warmed up" to his subject.

"My people, my people, my people, my people," he said, "today it is an expensive dinner party, followed by the theater. Tomorrow, it is an automobile ride over smooth roads, dinner at the Plaza; then motion pictures—the total capital of equipment being tools, books, furniture and so forth, amounting to \$1,000 or more.

"What about the same class of country men?" he asked after a pause. "One of them has his \$10,000 equipment and by working from dawn 'til dark makes enough to pay up his debts. Then he discovers that winter repairs will eat up the rest. His college education helps him produce better stuff than his neighbors; but his additional equipment and the increased valuation of his properties seem to be liabilities. He got the farm only by inheritance.

"Let me draw a true picture of the state, this farm stands out as one of the best I have seen. Every member of the family of seven was educated in colleges. I have a lawyer, doctor and a farmer in mid-life, the farmer having the best natural ability. The professional brothers live sumptuously. The farmer barely makes more than enough to make ends meet, but when asked how town life would appeal to him, he replied:

"The country for me. Out at the crack of day and you feel fit for any job, while if you sleep until seven, you are almost lifeless. At breakfast time, everything tastes good. You know we eat three meals a day. After breakfast, there is work until noon; then a big dinner; more hard work and dirty work until late, when another big meal awaits destruction.

Several chores around the house and barn, follow; then comes a peek at the paper just before my eyes. 'Better get to bed, Henry.' Insomnia is foreign to me. I drink ten times the water that my brothers do. You couldn't hire me to stay up until ten o'clock at night, for I couldn't without help.

"This is the life; perfect health

and contentment. Even though the farmer suffers many privations, vexations and gets poor financial remuneration this is the life worth living.

"This is as good as we should live, for by the sweat of our brow we are kept healthy and by heavy toll and meek remuneration we appreciate what our dollars buy, leaving us full opportunity to think of our neighbors' problems and friendships, as well as enjoy the full fruits of our toil. Every day, despite its problems, is one great, sweet song filled with nature's poetry and art," said the statistician.

"Maybe his picture of farm life is all of the bright side. There is always a dark side that, anyway, I would like to try this farm life for a while." And with this joint remark, a couple of newspaper men who had been listening, ambled away to grind out copy and to plan a week-end trip to the country.

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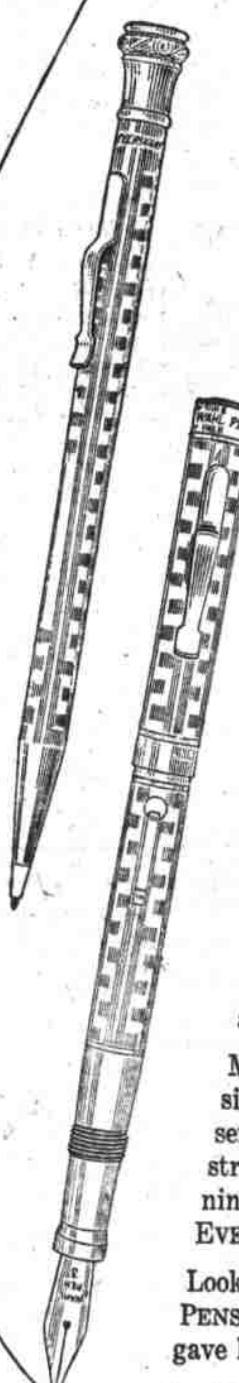
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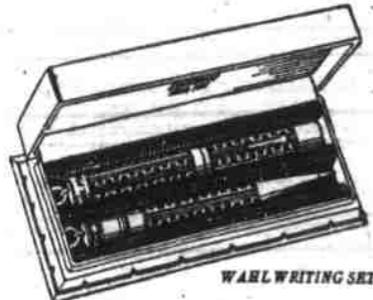
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Minneapolis, Dec. 4.—William Armour, 41, discoverer of Ty Cobb and long a professional baseball player, died here yesterday, following a stroke of apoplexy on Thursday. Armour played before 1900 and was for a time manager of the Dayton, Ohio office building and in Meyer's club in the old Central league.

Fox farming in the United States is estimated to harvest approximately \$8,000,000 yearly.