

Washington Digest

Fear of Farm Land Boom Adds to Inflation Worry

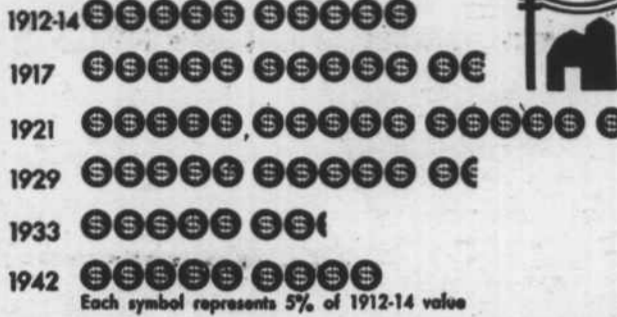
Official Figures Show Agricultural Unit Values Have Increased 20 to 24 Per Cent in Year.

By BAUKHAGE
News Analyst and Commentator.

TELEFACT

WAR RAISES VALUE OF FARM REAL ESTATE

(VALUE PER ACRE IN U. S. A.)



Each symbol represents 5% of 1912-14 value

WNU Service, Union Trust Building
Washington, D. C.

For many months now, government offices and conference rooms, no matter how they might echo with glowing reports from the Home of the battle front, have never been quite free from a ghost. It hovers in the corner and sends chills down every spine—it is the ghost of Old Man Inflation, trying to come back to the scene of his crimes in the roaring twenties.

The Office of War Information has just issued a warning that this specter may appear in his most frightful form if we are not careful. The fat pay envelope is the inflation danger you hear most about. But there is a worse one, namely, a farm land boom. So far, there has been no spectacular rise in farm land prices but a dangerous trend has been discovered in some states and the bureau of agricultural economics is decidedly worried. Here are some figures.

Up 20 Per Cent

As of March 1 of this year, increases in farm land values over those of the previous year were 20 to 24 per cent.

In September, 1941, I wrote in these columns:

"Money to burn!
"And the burning question is how to stop the conflagration before it starts. The chief danger is another prairie fire of farm land speculation such as started in Iowa in World War I . . . Today, two years after the present war started, farm land prices are up 1 per cent . . ."

Remember, that was written in September, 1941. Well, steps were taken to prevent speculation then and they met with success. However, as we have seen by comparing figures, land prices in some states have now increased considerably. That is natural for much has happened since 1941. In 1942, as the Office of War Information points out, "for the first time in 20 years, the annual average of farm prices reached parity with other prices." Since the outbreak of the war, the average of farm prices has risen more than 90 per cent, and farm income by about 80 per cent while the average prices paid by farmers, including interest and taxes, has increased about 25 per cent.

Farm income was around 19 billion dollars in 1941—it will be about 23 billion for 1943.

That means, of course, that the farmer has money to spend and it is natural that land values would rise to some degree. As I said, they have gone up as high as 24 per cent in some states and less than 6 per cent in only six states. Those figures, says the bureau of agricultural economics "bear watching!" It is also reported that bankers in some parts of the Middle West believe that in some cases, the land values have risen beyond their real worth based on the long-time earning capacity of the land. That, if it is true, of course means that right now some farmers are buying land that won't pay for itself.

It is reasonable to suppose that they are not members of that unhappy group of 85,000 farm owners who met Old Man Inflation before and who lost their property under foreclosure in the decade that ended in 1939. If they are, they deserve to suffer again. But the unfortunate thing is that when the farmer

loses, the rest of the country does, too. We have struggled through minor industrial panics, as we used to call them, but when the farm goes, it means that things are in such a way that there is no stopping until everybody touches bottom.

Campaign Worked in '41

The article which I wrote in 1941 reported a meeting here in Washington of mortgage bankers, insurance people, farm organization representatives and others who were urged by the Farm Credit administration to make normal appraisals of land. Apparently they did a pretty good job. Meanwhile, an educational campaign was started urging the farmer, instead of rushing out and buying land with the first money he got as income increased, to pay off his debts. It was gratifying to see the results. In the next year (1942) the net reduction of mortgages was 360 million dollars as against an average of 120 million reduction over the three preceding years. Of course, there is nothing Old Man Inflation hates worse than seeing debts paid up.

Another thing which has helped the present situation is the fact that the farmers who are buying land now usually put up a large initial cash payment. In other words, they are avoiding future debts and that is another thing, of course, which is equally unpleasant to Old Man Inflation.

There is nothing to stop the farmer from speculating in land if he wants to, buying on a margin the way the gamblers used to do on the stock exchange. Now such transactions are considerably limited by law but there is no law to keep a farmer from gambling if he doesn't know any better.

'Psychology for The Fighting Man'

I have just been reading a little booklet called "Psychology for the Fighting Man." It is one of those books published primarily for the soldiers, and every soldier able to read, ought to have it. It has 20 chapters, each written by a well-known psychologist or expert in his line. Any chapter can be read separately and they are all highly interesting. Familiarity with them will make any man a better soldier and a better leader. The chapter on mobs is only one. It tells how and why mobs form, what starts a panic and how to stop one.

But here are a few of the other topics I found exceedingly interesting: Psychology and combat Seeing in the dark Color and camouflage Food and sex as military problems Differences among races and peoples and many others.

Simply-told psychology. In this war, a man needs all the helps of that kind that he can get for the contrast between army life and civilian life is greater than ever.

This book, "Psychology for the Fighting Man," is put out by a non-profit corporation—the Infantry Journal, here in Washington. It costs only a quarter. It is for the soldier, sailor, private or general, ensign or admiral. And it would be a good idea for a lot of next of kin to read this book, too. It might help them to understand what the soldier is up against.

FIRST-AID to the AILING HOUSE

by Roger E. Whitman

Roger E. Whitman—WNU Features.

You may not be able to replace worn or broken household equipment. This is war. Government priorities come first. So take care of what you have . . . as well as you possibly can. This column by the housewife's friend tells you how.

STONE FOUNDATIONS

IN PUTTING UP a building of any sort, it is never wise to have wood in direct contact with the earth. Sooner or later trouble will be sure to come from the rotting of the wood through dampness or from attack by termites or other insects. Some kinds of wood such as cypress and redwood are resistant to trouble from rotting, but in time, even these are not entirely immune. In anything but a shack, the parts in contact with the earth should be of masonry, with well made poured concrete the first choice. When alterations to an old building or re-grading around it may bring the wooden parts into contact with soil, it is best to replace the woodwork with concrete. Sometimes it is possible to protect the wooden parts with a concrete wall, but for safety, this should be waterproofed with a coating of tar.

Soundproofing

Question: I live in an old house with a party wall. My neighbors begin their day when I am ready to retire. Is there any way I can have a room insulated against sound?

Answer: Thorough soundproofing is not possible, but fair results may be had by lining the noisy wall with a double layer of insulating materi-



An old plaything comes in a new model. This all-wood version of an indoor swing, on display at the Merchandise Mart, Chicago, resembles a scooter. It is suspended at three points.

al. Fur out the wall with 2 by 4 inch studs, nailing them in place at the floor and ceiling. Nail a one-inch (or thicker) insulating blanket between the studs and then cover the wall with an insulating wall-board.

Shingle Stain

Question: What is the formula for mixing shingle stain?

Answer: Mix in the proportion of four parts raw linseed oil, two parts coal-tar creosote and one part japan drier. For colors other than brown, tint with color-in-oil thinned with linseed oil to the above formula.

Lumber for Bookcase

Question: I wish to make some wall bookcases. What wood would I use other than white pine? Would maple be too hard for me to handle?

Answer: White pine is easiest to work with. Maple, birch or oak can be used, but these woods are harder and cutting would not be so easy.

Fuel Oil Stains

Question: How can stains of fuel oil be removed from asbestos shingles on the outside of a house?

Answer: Wash repeatedly with a solution of washing soda in water; three pounds to the gallon.

Painting Screen Door

Question: Which side of a screen door should I paint so that people cannot see through it from the street?

Answer: For best results and appearance, paint both sides.

Painting Over Caseln

Question: What should I do to walls which are now finished with caseln paint, before applying oil paint?

Answer: A clean surface is all that is necessary.

Tin Roof Leaks

Question: Paint on my tin roof has curled up at the joints and rain leaks in. Should I replace this tin with other types of roofing or can it be repaired?

Answer: Soldering open joints may stop the leakage. Remove the old paint, clean the metal and apply a prime coat of good quality red lead paint; allowing a week or more for drying. Finish with a good quality outside house paint in a light color. If the tin is in good condition I see no reason for replacing it.



OUR OWN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON VACATION GAS

Q.—What is meant by a single round trip to a cottage?
A.—Don't begin this by getting into an argument.

Q.—Instead of driving to a vacation place 15 miles away and return is it okay if I drive to one 30 miles away and leave the car there until the war is over?
A.—If the garage people don't object.

Q.—What is the meaning of the clause "for vacation purposes for which adequate alternative transportation is not available"?
A.—That is put in to make it harder.

Q.—What is "adequate alternative transportation"?
A.—Boy, will the ration board get into arguments over that one!

Q.—When is alternative transportation really "available"? A bus runs to my vacation place but it is always crowded. Does that constitute available transportation?
A.—Lissen, save time by seeing your legal staff.

Q.—What is all this certification business? How do I certify that I have enough gas, or coupons for enough gas, for a vacation trip?
A.—You must put it in writing.

Q.—Won't OPA take my word?
A.—You've been an A card holder long enough to know your word is never taken.

Q.—Do I really have to certify my speedometer reading before I leave?
A.—Yes, sir. The OPA wants to start you off on your vacation under the usual suspicions or not at all.

Q.—Must I certify that I have a vacation place to go to?
A.—Positively. You might be fooling the OPA.

Q.—How?
A.—By just using the gas without going on a vacation.

Q.—What would be the difference. It would be the same gas wouldn't it?
A.—There you go quibbling again.

Q.—If I am driving to my cottage and inspectors hold me up as a pleasure driver what do I do?
A.—You show them a "vacation validation" certificate. This makes the vacation valid.

Q.—But does it make me valid?
A.—On an A card you can never be quite valid.

Q.—I have a cottage 20 miles away. A neighbor has a better one 40 miles away and wants me to spend my vacation with him. If we pool our gas we could make this trip using less fuel than if we took separate ones. Would this be permitted?
A.—Probably not. It sounds too reasonable.

Q.—After reading all the requirements I do not feel like going on a vacation by car. Must I?
A.—So you're running out on us after all this trouble!

ADOLF DECIDES ON A NEW UNIFORM

"I am putting on the uniform of a soldier, never to take it off until Germany is victorious everywhere." Hitler in 1939.

Tailor—Ah, Herr Hitler, what can I do for you?
Hitler—I need some new clothes.
Tailor—I hadn't expected you so soon.

Hitler—That goes for me, too. But it's an uncertain era. Anyhow this uniform hasn't stood up the way it should.

Tailor—After all, you've had steady wear since 1939. Hiss it had steady wear?

Hitler—Has it!
Tailor—Is this the one you put on when the war broke out and said you would never take off until it ended with victory?

Hitler (sadly)—Ach, yes!
Tailor—Well, there's a limit to the wearing quality of any material. It looks pretty worn everywhere except in the seat. That's as good as new.

Hitler—That's easily explained: I haven't had any chance to sit down in it.
Tailor—Were the pants always as baggy as this?

Hitler—I'm not sure whether they were that loose to begin with or whether I've shrunk.

Tailor—Well, let us go on. Now about the length of the pants?
Hitler—Make them a lot shorter than the old ones.

Tailor—A lot shorter? You don't want running pants?
Hitler—ZZAT SO!!!

A bull market in wild animals is reported. So many human beings these days are discovering they can use them for doubles.

MANPOWER SHORTAGE

Utterances made by the fair sex in recent years:
1941.—"What a man!"
1942.—"What? A man!"
1943.—"What's a man?"

Descriptions of the Hour: He had the worried look of an "A" card vacationist.



Washington MERRY-GO-ROUND

DREW PEARSON

Washington, D. C.

GERMAN-ITALIAN ANTAGONISM
With the invasion of Sicily, the question of whether Germany and Italy can pull together as a team now becomes something much more than a subject of amusing wisecracks. The basic hostility always existing between them—both the armies and the people—may now prove to be the fatal fault in the Axis.

United States diplomats and newsmen who lived interned in Italy until May, 1943, recall many an expression of Italian resentment against the Germans.

On the night before the interned Americans left Rome to return to the U. S., a group of newspapermen, including Richard G. Massock of the Associated Press, visited a restaurant called Biblioteca, which had been a favorite haunt for most of them before the days of internment. The place was packed, largely with Germans, but when the head waiter recognized them, he hustled some diners off, to make room for his old American friends.

An Italian at the next table mumbled something about Germans intruding, whereupon AP's Massock spoke up: "We are not German!" "Excuse me," said the Italian, indicating clearly that to call a man a German is a fighting word.

This prompted another Italian to come to Massock, the first American he had seen for months. With an affectionate embrace, he said: "Please give my kid regards to President Roosevelt!"

TANKS AND POTATOES
The army doesn't like to say too much about it, but the United States now has an embarrassment of riches with respect to tanks. A year ago, and for at least a year before that, there was great clamor about speeding production of this weapon with which Hitler overran the continent.

However, both the invasion of Sicily and raids over Germany now make it apparent that the weapon with which we shall take back the continent is not the tank but the plane.

Tanks were needed for the campaign in North Africa, and a year ago they were the most important weapon in the arsenal in preparation for the landing of November 8.

But fewer tanks had been expended in North Africa than had been expected, and we still have most of those which were sent to that theater. Further, there will be less demand for tanks in Europe than in Africa, because of shorter distances and less mobility.

A tank factory closed down in Ohio last week, a fact which normally would have caused great alarm. But it passed almost unnoticed because of the fact that we now have miles of tanks standing in line waiting to be used in whatever theater may require them.

Note: Claude Wickard says that tanks are like potatoes. A few months ago everybody clamored for them. Now they are a glut on the market.

NAZI AIR STRENGTH

Air force experts are commenting on the fact that German air activity is stiffer in every theater of the European war. More German planes have been rushed to Italy, are also active on the Russian front, and are more active over the European continent in combating Allied bomb raids than at any previous time in the war.

Experts believe the Germans have put up all their air strength. This is highly significant, for it means they have taken everything they have, leaving no reserves.

Thus every loss inflicted on the Luftwaffe in any of these theaters represents a decline from the minimum required for a defense of the continent. And when you cut a force below its necessary minimum, you are bringing about its downfall.

MERRY-GO-ROUND

A professional cameraman's appraisal of capital figures, as seen under the flash bulb: Cordell Hull, patient; Donald Nelson, harried and hurried; handsome Ed Stettinius, vain as a Hollywood actor; Henry Wallace, philosophically reflecting on "how the news camera distorts life."

Enemy broadcasts, intercepted by FCC, declare Washington is pushing an Argentine break with the Axis with "increasing eagerness" to satisfy U. S. "appetite for encamping" on the Falkland Islands—"unjustly" snatched by Britain from Argentina. Thus Berlin tries to drive wedges both between Argentina and U. S., and between U. S. and Britain.

PACIFIC WAR WILL TIGHTEN

Operations in the Pacific have met with glorious initial successes, and American forces will push on from one island to another, in a campaign which will have no permanent pause.

But don't look for a continuation of one-sided warfare much longer. We made our first landings in places where the Japanese were weak and where resistance was not substantial. But as we advance farther, resistance will become stiffer, and the progress slower.

Kathleen Norris Says:

In Time of War Prepare for Peace

Bell Syndicate.—WNU Features.



"We had a family conference. We know this isn't going to last, and we face the fact, too, that one or more of our three beloved sailors may come home invalided, and that all three will like us better, when employment problems come, if we can be a help rather than burden to them."

By KATHLEEN NORRIS

GET your affairs in order this year, if you can, and be able to look forward with perfect confidence to the years ahead.

That's the thing we all want. To feel sure of the future. The man or woman who can say "Well, whatever comes, I'm fixed," is the man or woman to be envied. No matter whether his or her ambitions run to a modest little farm where a few apple trees, two dozen chickens and a cow will help to pay expenses, or to solid investments in bonds and stocks that will bring in a comfortable \$200 a month, or annuities, or rents, or whatever other form thrift and farsightedness suggest—there is no sensation in life more desirable than the one that insures a self-respecting, independent, comfortable old age.

But old age comes on fast. There aren't many years in which plans for it may be made. It has a way of arriving with shocking unexpectedness, and to many, many men and women the moment of its arrival is going to coincide with the conclusion of this war. When that time comes thousands of young men are going to come home to the America they have risked their lives to save, and we have solemnly promised each and every one of them a good job.

That means that thousands of women, now earning big money, and thousands of older men, who have perhaps abandoned their old familiar jobs to jump into war work, are going to be dropped from the payrolls. There is no other way.

Money Floods in Now.
Today Bill Brown may be making \$65 a week, instead of the old steady \$30 he made for so many years. Mother Brown is earning, almost that, and Sally and Jane are being paid every week what they used to earn every month. Bob, Jane's husband, sends home fifty a month—it stuns up to about a thousand dollars every 30 days—wealth that the Browns never anticipated in their wildest dreams.

And isn't it fun to spend money royally and recklessly when at last you have it to spend!

But also nobody knows better than those of us who remember the last war, that terrific and far-reaching changes follow a war. Inflation is an inevitable part of wars, and when things are sufficiently inflated they burst. War inflations burst when peace comes in sudden collapses of everything. Factories haven't started up yet; building is at a standstill; big salaries stop; unemployment grows and grows. Elderly women, now complacently making their hundreds a month, will be replaced everywhere by youth. These things are inevitable, to some extent.

Preparedness Will Soften Change.
Inevitable. But only to the extent we choose to permit them. If each and every one of us does her share to get ready for that time by sensible action now, we can minimize the effects of the change from all-out war to all-time peace, survive it with very little confusion and discomfort, and go on triumphantly into America's future—the brightest, the securest future any country has ever known in this world. Nothing can keep us from a position of tremendous power after this time of war, and as we have always used that power for good—for peace, for the prosperity of all our people—instead of a few, for democracy and equality, we may believe that civil-

WARTIME THRIFT BRINGS PEACETIME SECURITY

We must not be extravagant merely because wartime conditions have made it possible for many of us to earn more money than ever before. We must be thrifty despite added income and plan for old age as well as the period of readjustment which will follow the war. Also, whenever possible, those at home should prepare to help our fighters when they return. That is Kathleen Norris' message this week. She includes a letter from a woman whose family is pooling its efforts so that when three sailors return they will have three farms as a homecoming present.

lization will take a long step forward.

Kate Marvin is one of the few women who sees this now. "Every woman will see it in a year or two, but Kate is ahead of the rest. Here is a part of her letter:

"We didn't get into debt any more than most people, before the war," writes Kate, "but we did run up a little bill; doctor and dentist were never caught up, grocery and milk bills accumulated. But we had three sons who seemed likely to help out some day and Dad and I rather spoiled our boys and our girl, and lived up fully to every cent of our income.

"Then came the war; all three boys into uniform long before Pearl Harbor, and Sister into uniform, too, as a riveter. Dad's pay was upped from about \$300 a month to some months—\$900, and I took a part-time job that netted \$125.

"Well, then we had a family conference. We know this isn't going to last, and we face the fact, too, that one or more of our three beloved sailors may come home invalided, and that all three of them will like us better, when employment problems come, if we can be a help rather than a burden to them. So we decided the house to Sister, and Sister puts \$100 a month into the debt on the house. The debt is owed to the government, which sent architects to us, and helped us turn our 14 big rooms into three apartments. They submitted plans, authorized the work, and they carry the loan. You see, we live in a coast town whose population has increased more than a hundred per cent since the war began, and living space is at a premium.

Buy Farms for Sons.
"Then Dad and I picked out three small farms that were going cheap because of labor shortage, and when our boys come home each one will be presented with an income-earning piece of property. These farms cost us an average of \$12,000 apiece; all three are somewhat rundown now, but in good farm neighborhoods and capable of real productivity. Our payments on them come to a little more than \$3,600 a year—they are already half cleared. "This means that we live simply and cheaply. But we love it; the crampedness and dullness, the sacrificing and self-denial. We're living for the time when the boys come home, to take possession of their farms. We're living for the time when we can tell them that with two good tenants upstairs, and with our own earnings and savings, we needn't ever turn to them for help. They can marry, raise children, enjoy for long years the peace and freedom that they've helped win for us all.

BRIEFS . . . by Baukhage

In addition to the two pairs of shoes issued every American soldier on entering the service, three extra pairs must be available in reserve, and two more pairs in process of manufacture.

Almost 1 1/2 billion rounds of small arms ammunition is being turned out each month. That is seven times as much as the 1938 peak.

The Japanese Domei agency disclosed that Emperor Hirohito had sent a message of "congratulations" to Marshal Henri Philippe Petain, Vichy chief of state, "on the occasion of Bastille day."

Under wartime operation, railroad freight cars must travel about 16 per cent farther on the average haul.