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THE FARMER'S POWER PLANT

MORE POWER USED ON FARMS OF COUNTRY THAN BY ALL THE INDUSTRIAL PLANTS.

Who are the great users of power—the farmers or the manufacturers? The question put in this way seems absurd, yet the total amount of power used on farms in the United States exceeds all that employed in our vast manufacturing industries. At least, this is the result of an examination made by Philip S. Rose, editor of the American Thrasherman (Madison, Wis.) and now printed by him in a separate pamphlet. The reason we do not rate the farmer highly as a power-user is because most of his power is derived from animals. He must use more and more. Mr. Rose thinks, as time goes on, and his inevitable adoption of mechanical motors will not decrease at all the number of animals that it will still be necessary for him to keep. We read:

"Horses and mules are the farmer's principal source of power. There was a time when oxen were used, but that time has long since passed. In the early days, when the country was poorer, and when agriculture was less highly developed, they were a factor, but at present they are a negligible quantity. Farmers find it cheaper to use horses, even though they are more expensive, because of their greater activity. Here is a fact worthy of serious consideration in the contemplation of the possible change to mechanical power.

"The last government census of 1910 showed that there were a total of 24,042,882 horses and mules on the farms of the United States. Estimates of the department of agriculture, on January 1, 1914, placed the number at 25,411,000. If we assume that 80 per cent of these animals are mature, there are now available for farm-work purposes 20,328,800 work-animals. On the basis that each animal will develop an average of seven-tenths of a horse-power, we find that the total available animal-power amounts to 14,230,000 horse-power expressed in mechanical units, or almost exactly three-fourths as much power as was employed in all branches of manufacturing as shown by the 1910 census."

Despite this great showing, we are not moving forward in our use of power for agriculture. So far as the amount of animal-power to work our farm-lands is concerned, Mr. Rose tells us that the country has stood still. We are using practically the same number that our fathers used. The majority of farmers, even yet, depend upon one horse to plow twenty acres of land, prepare for the crop, do the seeding and cultivating, and finally harvest the crop and haul it to market. If the work could be spread out over all the year, the animals would not be overworked and the land could be thoroughly tilled; but this is not possible. In our Northern states a horse works on an average only about three hours a day throughout the year, but in the busy season it works long hours. Mr. Rose goes on:

"It would seem as though the number of work-animals for farm-work is not governed by the power necessary to do the work to best advantage, but rather by what the farmer can afford to keep and get the work done after a fashion. All authorities on tillage agree that the depth of plowing should be increased from the present average depth of four or five inches to eight or nine inches, and deeper in some sections of the country. Very few farm-lands are plowed as deeply as they should be, and it is doubtful if the present animal equipment is equal to the task of cultivating the soil to the proper depth."

The signs all point, the writer thinks, both to an increased use of animals on the farm and to the introduction of mechanical power in large amounts. He says:

"The multiplicity of machines for doing various kinds of farm-work that have been brought out during the last score of years has made it impossible for any farmer to compete with the old hand-methods and prosper. Power-driven machines are now a necessity and are becoming more so every year. Machines have been invented for almost every kind of work. There are sawing-machines, pumping-machinery, machines for grinding feed, cutting ensilage, shelling and shredding corn, and for a thousand and one other kinds of work. No up-to-date farmer will now do by hand what can be done by machinery, if he has enough work to occupy more than a day or two. In fact, with the high cost of hand-labor, he can not afford to do so."

The available mechanical farm-power consists of steam-engines, internal-combustion engines, windmills, and water-power. Electric power is convenient, but still costly for the farmer. Water-power is also expensive and not generally available. Windmills, except for pumping, do not develop enough horsepower. This

leaves only the steam, oil- or gas engine. Just now the light tractor is in favor, weighing six to eight thousand pounds, with a 30-horse-power motor. We read:

"A careful canvass of the states west of the Mississippi made last winter by Mr. A. P. Yerkes, a government agent connected with the bureau of farm management of the United States department of agriculture, shows that there are something like thirteen thousand tractors in operation. There are probably not to exceed one-quarter as many east of the river, making something less than 20,000 tractors in use in the entire country. These tractors vary greatly in size, but will doubtless average close to forty brake horse-power each.

"The possibilities for the use of tractors are, however, almost unlimited when the number of farms of large size containing 175 acres or more is considered. Each one of these farms would appear to be large enough to make profitable use of some form of mechanical power for general farm use, provided one can be built and sold for a price at which the farmer can afford to make the investment."

Steam-engines will long be used for threshing; and there are now probably not far from 100,000 of them in use in the United States for this and similar work. Finally we have the small portable gas or oil engine averaging five horse-power, of which Mr. Rose thinks we must be using at least a million. With them we saw wood, pump, grind feed, fill silos, generate light, spray fruit-trees, and do hundreds of odd jobs about the farm.

"AMERICA FIRST" WILL BE TOUCHED ON IN MESSAGE.

President Wilson has completed his annual address to Congress, which he will read at a joint session of the senate and house next Tuesday.

In preparation of the address the president has followed the precedent set by him when he inaugurated the custom of reading his message to Congress in person and it contains no long review of the activities of the different government departments. It is understood that there are less than 4,000 words in the document.

It is understood that the message not only will treat upon greater preparedness for national defense, but will call to the attention of Congress the explosions and fires in American industrial plants.

The president intends to recommend that the Sherman law be amended to include severe penalties for such restraints of trade. Any division in the ranks of American citizens whose sympathies with the warring belligerents may have led to excesses will be emphatically condemned as un-American. In several recent speeches the president has spoken for "America first" and called upon Americans to stand united. That he considered the situation of sufficient importance to bring to the attention of Congress, however, had not generally been realized. The president is expected to refer to the subject in his address in connection with a general statement that the United States can be really prepared only if its citizens stand together and repel outside influences.

The Freedom of the Press.

Freedom of the press means, in fact, the right to bring the government of the people before the public bar of justice, states Lenn J. Oar in the November Case and Comment. In this manner it safeguards the free government which we enjoy. The press must be free to discuss affairs of government. It must also be free to discuss public officials and candidates, their actions, character, and motives. The privilege must be exercised in order that the government and the people can be informed as to their true relations. The liberty of the press must mean the right to publish with impunity all matters affecting the government, public activities and public men, and to be protected in so doing except when such publication becomes a public offense by reason of its blasphemy, obscenity, or scandalous character, or when it arises from malice and proscribes the privilege itself, at the same time either fomenting rebellion lawlessness, or injuriously affecting the reputation or financial interests of individuals.

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DEMOCRATS PREPARING FOR COMING SESSION.

Democrats of both houses of Congress Monday got their work of organization for the coming session well under way. The senate conference re-elected Senator Kern, of Indiana, as chairman and floor leader, and the house ways and means committee began the puzzling task of assigning members to committees.

Opposition has developed to the reelection of Senator Clark, of Arkansas, as president pro tempore because of his fight against the ship purchase bill at the last session. No other candidate has appeared, but consideration of the matter was deferred upon request of several senators.

The house ways and means committee, with Representative Kitchin in the chair, received a petition from Minority Leader Mann for larger Republican representation on all committees in view of the increased minority membership. A tentative plan was agreed upon by which one additional Republican would be added to the ways and means, appropriations, military, naval and judiciary committees. No final decision was reached, however, and it probably will be several days before the assignments can be worked out.

When re-organization of senate committees begins six new Democratic senators and three new Republicans must be taken care of. Democratic leaders are seeking to make room on the finance committee for Senator Underwood, of Alabama, former chairman of the house ways and means committee, and it is probable that Senator Phelan, of California, will be assigned to the committee on foreign affairs, which is to be increased by one member.

Time Not Ripe.

Washington, Nov. 30.—State department officials who talked with Brand Whitlock, American minister to Belgium, today obtained the impression he believes that the time is not ripe to make peace proposals to the warring nations. Mr. Whitlock was careful to avoid any direct statement of his belief in that connection, but officials with whom he talked said later they were sure the minister thinks the allies would resist any peace move now.

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