

How the Large Land Owner Can Farm Better.

He Should Arouse Ambition Among His Tenants, be Their Leader to Better Farming, and Improve His Soil.

While *The Progressive Farmer* is especially anxious to serve the small farmers and is constantly in receipt of letters showing that it does help them, it has been indicated to us that some practical advice for the large planter would be appreciated. If the large planter has tenants that he can control, there is no reason why the things advised for the small farmer should not be found practical for the large plantation owner.

Give Tenants Good Opportunity.—In a few instances owners of miles of land have found it good for all concerned to give tenants a house and means for working their crops, with the stipulation that the land-owner may insist on their working for him so many days each week. The tenants' crop may be their sole property or the joint property of the workmen and of the land-owner, as may be agreed on, but the day work the tenants do for the land-owner is paid for in cash and largely takes the place of the customary advances to tenants. This enables the land-owner to have his work done as he wants it done, and also allows the tenant to feel that he is working for himself, something the tenant usually is particular about. Either the land-owner or his overseer will have to supervise the day work, as he would in other cases. With this plan may go the scheme of encouraging tenants to raise more of their own supplies, to keep poultry and hogs and a cow, charging them in some form for what pasture they use. A tenant is inclined to think that he is not getting much pay because not much money is given to him; and it will help him to realize what he is getting and make him better satisfied, if a specified amount is charged for the house and barn he uses and for the fenced enclosures where pasturing is done and where the garden is raised. This is not theorizing—rather it is history. If tenants can be shown that their chance of gain is increased, the better class can be prevailed on to try this plan one year; and the results of that first year will make them want to try the plan in the future.

Look After Rotation and Soil Fertility.—It is just as necessary for the landlord with miles of land to keep up his soil fertility as it is for the small farmer to do it. This plan will give him a better opportunity to control the labor, while it also is good for the tenants. The landlord will be able, if he has suitable land, to raise supplies for his own tenants or for neighbors. Hay and corn and oats are always salable; and if marketed judiciously, are profitable. The land-owner will have to see to it that corn and oat raising is done rightly, that common cotton field methods are not practiced in the corn field and that rust proof oats are planted and that the planting is done in the fall. Oat and hay growing may be managed largely with mules and machinery, so that little man work is necessary for a large acreage. One of the most serious problems for a great many owners of large plantations is to get labor enough; and if crops are grown, such as oats and hay or peas for hay, that farms many acres with few hands, the labor problem is practically solved. It will also be better for the soil and better from the standpoint of current profit.

Give Attention to Live Stock.—Live stock also will help to make good use of a large acreage with a comparatively small number of laborers; but, at least, part of the laborers will then have to be above the ordinary cotton field type. For one who has not had experience with live stock, more risk would be run in attempting to grow it than there would be in raising hay or oats, or even corn. The risk of loss in live stock raising would increase as the attention given by the land-owner to the enterprise decreased, unless he should be fortunate in having a manager who understood the business and who was reliable and could be depended on to continue the work from year to year.

Live Stock is Good for Tenants and the Soil.—Many land-owners consider that they are doing well for themselves when they prevent tenants from raising live stock; but in the end, they are working against their own interest thereby. The more live stock there are on land, the better it is

for the soil. Also, a better class of tenants will be kept on the land if they are encouraged to raise stock. The quality of the tenant is as important to the land-owner as is the kind of cultivation that is done. A good tenant will do good farming, and that is to the interest of the land-owner. Hence, if raising live stock will interest and keep an intelligent tenant on the place, he should be encouraged to raise stock. Inefficient labor is one of the worst drawbacks that a land-owner can have.

Improve Your Class of Tenants.—Of course, we all realize that there is a class of land-owners who prefer ignorant tenants, with all their incompetency and unreliability, because this class of land-owners think it is to their interest to have tenants who are hopelessly at the mercy of the land-owners. There can be little doubt that such land-owners become the victims of their own cupidity, by pursuing such a policy. Poor tenants mean poor crops and impoverished soil. The small crops produced by poor tenants yield so little profit that extortions made through the furnishing of supplies cannot make the total profit of the landlord a satisfactory one, when it is considered that there is a large risk in furnishing supplies to the ignorant and unreliable class of tenants. Even if the land-owner should be able to draw out a little apparent profit from year to year on his investment, his soil will so depreciate that he will finally lose the best part of his investment. When the most valuable part of the soil fertility is gone and little more than subsoil remains of his land, he is just one step from a bankrupt. If he does not see before that time, whether he is drifting, he will find it very difficult to interest good tenants in trying to raise crops on his subsoil; and land that is little more than subsoil is not going to sell for a good price. The land-owner cannot afford to pursue a policy which compels him to worry along with the worst class of tenants, even if the tenants get nothing out of their work but what they can eat. What the landlord will get from such tenants will in the end fail to balance what he loses by having his land worked by them. The land-owner should just as early as possible inaugurate a policy that will draw to him and his land the best tenants that can be had. Tenant farming at its best is hard on the soil; and with the worst class of tenants, the soil suffers very much more.

Awaken and Stimulate Ambition of the Tenants.—The land-owner should take special pains to have the tenants understand that they are wanted to stay on on the land year after year, and that if they handle the land well this year they will be rewarded by larger crops in future years. The tenants should feel that the land-owner considers them in a sense partners who are to share in the benefits of a good condition of the soil, and that the land-owner wishes them well and is working for their interest as well as his own. In every case possible he should try to awaken ambition in the tenants, since a man without ambition does not do much for himself or anybody else.

It has worked out well for the land-owner to offer prizes for the tenants who excelled in some particular line; and it is well to vary the prizes, so that a tenant who shows special aptitude for any line of work may have a chance to excel in that particular line, while some other may win in another line. It creates a rivalry, awakens ambition, gets results. Many a man who has no other ambition will almost work his head off in trying to do better than others who are competing with him. Both the ambition to surpass others and the shame of being excelled by all other competitors operate to arouse dullards and to make the lazy work. With such prizes offered for tenants, they become more willing to listen to advice from the land-owner and they begin to feel that the land-owner and other tenants are watching them, that their successes and failures are going to be talked about. The best that is in them comes out.

Teach Your Tenants and Give the Reason Why.—Along with this, it may be well for the land-owner to give his tenants a barbecue and to mix with them so that he may get in touch with them; and he can select such a time to give them all a

friendly talk on how to do their farming to the best advantage. The reasons why things are so will appeal to all classes. Telling a man that something is true, without explaining the reason, is not always convincing. For instance, if a tenant is told that shallow cultivation for corn is best, particularly the later cultivations, he may not be convinced and maybe not much impression is made on him; but if it is explained that the corn roots spread across the middles as soon as the corn is of considerable size and that they are near the surface of the ground, it will be understood that deep cultivation then would cut off the roots and injure the corn. Likewise, a good impression will be made if it is explained that loose soil to the depth of one and a half to two inches on top of the land will let rain into the soil rapidly and that the same loose layer of soil will prevent the air and sun from drying out the moisture that is further down, because the moisture cannot easily come up through the lumps of loose soil and the spaces that are between them. That kind of explanations will convince the tenant that there is reason in the recommendations made for his guidance.

Be a Capable and Worthy Guide to Your Tenants.—A land-owner may feel that he is above mixing up with his tenants so that he may better understand them and instruct them; but he is mostly interested in results. If he was a merchant, he would not think it belittled him to give them all the attention necessary to get profit from them by selling goods; and he can just as well give them enough attention on the farm to get profit from them by learning their needs and peculiarities and instructing them to make better crops. If a man was foreman of a construction gang, the men under him would look to him for guidance; and they would appreciate their relation to him if he always showed that he knew how to do things. A gang of workmen will follow such a man and work for him and fight for him because they honor him as a capable leader. They will overlook many things if he is a capable leader. The land-owner should be that. If he cannot act in that capacity, then his manager should be able to fill the place of a leader of recognized ability; but the land-owner himself ought to get better results as a leader than any representative of his could. Before one can act as this sort of leader for tenants, he must understand farming himself—not mere scratching of the ground. He must understand the principles underlying the growth of crops, what causes certain effects, and he must know how to make soil fertility while producing crops. He cannot influence others to do better farming till he himself understands how to do it and how to impart the information to those working under him. He will find it more profitable to instruct himself than to do nothing but cry out about inefficient labor. He cannot remake his tenants; but, unless he has less tact than other large land-owners have had, he can improve their methods and instill ambition in them. He will need persistence, but that is called for in doing almost anything that is worth while.

Co-operative Demonstration in Tenant Farming.—The Department of Agriculture finds headway is made toward better farming through the influence of demonstration farms. Why cannot the large land-owner profit by trying to make as many tenants as possible demonstration farmers under his own instruction? Those who follow good instructions will make extra profit for themselves and for the land-owner the first year, and their superior work of the first year will move others to do better the second. Seeing convinces when argument avails nothing.

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Agriculture! Local Schools Urgently Required.

One of the needed improvements is that of industrial education, both for the field and the factory. Agricultural colleges and experiment stations are doing a great missionary labor, but agricultural local schools to more thoroughly reach the children of the plantation hands, are urgently required. Indeed, the awakening has begun and the foundations for an American system of industrial education are now being laid, and, in less than a decade, I predict the United States will show mankind a system of industrial education thoroughly up to the standard of the American ideal, which is to turn out the best and the biggest thing on the earth.—From Governor John A. Johnson's address at Richmond, Va.