

# PRIDE, PATRIOTISM AND PROFITS INSURE IMMUNITY FROM FAMINE

## Production of Staple Crops, Says Economist, Depends More on Will Power than Weather, and 40,000,000 Determined Men and Women on American Farms Achieve a Maximum Harvest with Astonishing Regularity

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THE crop history of the United States should assure every citizen that the food supply is almost as much to be relied upon as the tides of the ocean. Prophets of disaster may be divided into three classes—those whose interest it is to advance prices, those who are temperamentally timid and full of forebodings of ill, and those who desire to weaken the courage of Americans in these days of trial. The answer to their prophecies may be read in the statistics.

The outstanding truth in all the data of crops for a hundred years exactly is that there has been an almost constant increase in the production of grains per capita since 1817. It was thirty-five bushels of the three important grains—wheat, oats and corn—even in 1916, and forty-six bushels per capita in 1915. Add rye, barley and buckwheat, and the per capita supply has been more than ten bushels more for many years. Of the three great cereals, the per capita production in 1891 was about forty bushels.

It has been objected by some persons that because 1916 was a poor year 1917 may be worse, and there may be no seed for 1918. The year 1913 was not so good as that which preceded, but there was seed enough to get a bigger crop in 1914. We had a run of three poor years in 1892, 1893 and 1894, but there was seed enough for a bumper crop in 1895, and for a still bigger crop in 1896.

But an examination of the crop reports shows that, properly considered, 1916 was really not a poor year; it was simply a poorer year than 1906, 1910, 1912 and 1915, and better than any other in our history. The trouble really was not in America, but elsewhere, as every one knows.

### Tradition Says Crops Wholly Failed in 1816

It is a matter of tradition not supported by authentic statistical evidence that in 1816 there was such a crop failure as forced us to import foodstuffs from France and England. It is said that there were killing frosts every month of the year as far south as Middle Virginia. We hear much of the hideous cold of the winters of long ago, but we fail to remember that our forefathers were less well protected against the cold in clothing and in shelter and in fuel. There is a similar answer to the fear that there will be snows in summer in Pennsylvania; and this answer is that in 1816 America relied for its food supply upon the North and Middle Atlantic coast. We rely upon thirty states beyond the Appalachians and below them. There is no tradition that there were killing frosts in Illinois and Iowa and Kansas every month of the year even in 1816.

An investigation of the crops of every state from 1880 till now—too long even to be summarized in a brief article—shows that there has been a truly astonishing regularity of total product from most of them. Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Iowa perform like clockwork. It gives to one inclined to fear and to try to make

others fearful pause to be confronted with the truth about these states. Corn may fall off a little, but then oats are sure to be a banner crop. Or wheat may have a little trouble; then hay comes in strong.

### Illinois a Large and Regular Producer

Illinois may be relied upon year after year for almost 400,000,000 bushels of corn. Illinois is only 2 per cent of the area of the United States, and only 5½ per cent of the population, but alone it raises about four bushels of corn per capita for all the land, or one-half pound per day per inhabitant for all our land in corn alone.

One reason why we Americans do not understand these facts better is because we do not think of them in the terms of areas and populations. In truth, Ohio and Indiana, each a considerably smaller state than either Illinois or Iowa, do about as well per acre and per capita in crop production, but their totals are not so impressive.

There are seven states, each good for over one hundred million bushels

some years, or because summer winds burn up the corn of Western Nebraska in two or three dreadful days—and I have watched the fields myself to my own loss—one need not be delivered over to the wild imagination that the crop has been destroyed in Indiana. The vastness of America means variety, and the variety means security.

To bring America to famine, from sea to sea, from Lakes to Gulf, is impossible.

Again, it has been objected that this year will prove one of disaster to the crops because so many men have gone into the army and into the cities for war work and the farms are more depleted than ever.

There are about twenty million Americans too young to do much valuable farm work, of whom twelve millions are upon farms. Nevertheless, the farm population of America is still some forty millions of adult workers, for farm women as well as men work. Even assuming that before autumn three hundred thousand young men go from the farms to the armies or to the cities, this is but 7 per cent of all the workers, and

try from the cities because of financial inducements. And it should be remembered that the army and navy reject men for physical defects of no importance in farm work. In some cases the rejection has led to a desire to go upon the farm, for obvious reasons, such as recovering weight, strengthening flat feet, straightening a weak back, curing a skin disease or hiding some infection from publicity until well. Of all this, the farmers stand upon notice.

### Crops Depend on Will Rather than Weather

Of course, the truth is that America raises about what is intended, and the total product is dependent rather upon will than upon weather. This sounds cruel to the man of the Western plains, who is sometimes balked by winds or by frosts, but elsewhere it is the plain truth. Tennessee yields crops that vary but a few per cent from year to year, for the weather is wonderfully reliable. But besides the weather the agricultural mind of the people of Tennessee must also be wonderfully reliable. It is reasonable to suppose that if the people of the state should form the intention to raise a bigger crop they could do it. The problem is that of turning over more sod and putting in more seed.

As Tennessee is the maximum for regularity, so Kansas is the maximum for variation; but fortunately nearly all the states rival Tennessee rather than Kansas.

The corn yield of America means in grain and in stalk the vast total of one trillion pounds, or five hundred million tons a year, which is five tons per inhabitant. The hay yield is less than half the total grass yield; this averages now for the last five years more than one hundred and fifty million tons, or three tons per inhabitant. These are foods for man and beast. The next proposition is inevitable, that the anxiety in America should be rather over how to utilize to the best advantage these enormous supplies than whether or not we are to have them as usual by October.

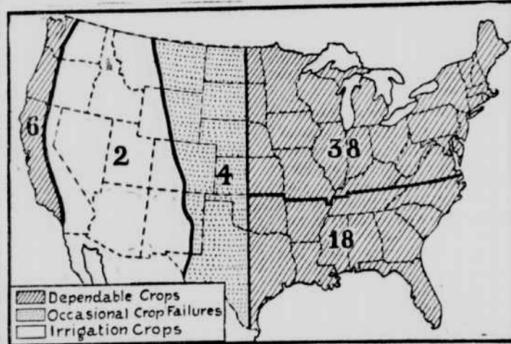
There is really no way to starve America other than to come here and by main force take the harvests from us. Under the conditions of our economic régime individuals may starve for want of money to buy food in competition with Europe, but there should be a way to prevent at least in its severe forms the result of this competition.

City men think of country men as being about so busy every day like themselves from year's end to year's end, but the case is otherwise. In war times there is a considerable slack to be taken up, and this will be taken up this year by American farmers.

The young men, who live for the day, are in the cities eating bread, not in the fields raising wheat; but the mature men, who live in plans for realizing a better future, will work as never before.

Three powerful purposes live in these farm men and women now. One purpose is straight money making; another is sheer patriotism, and a third is pride. Only a few days ago in an Ohio city a farmer called to jury service pleaded for release that he had a mortgage to lift and this

### WHERE CROPS ARE DEPENDABLE



Numbers indicate rural dwellers per mile. In the region of dependable crops yields are proportional to the number of rural inhabitants per square mile.

of corn every year, and their total averages two billion bushels a year; that is, twenty bushels of corn per inhabitant of our country, which is a thousand pounds of highly nutritious food. Of course, most of us prefer that the corn should be fed to beef cattle and to swine and come to us as meat. But, so considered, the corn supply of seven states alone is enough to give us a pound of meat per American per day.

The wheat supply means as a minimum six bushels per inhabitant per year, as an average eight bushels, and as a maximum realized several times in our history ten bushels, or two barrels. Nature and agriculture in America have set starvation far from us.

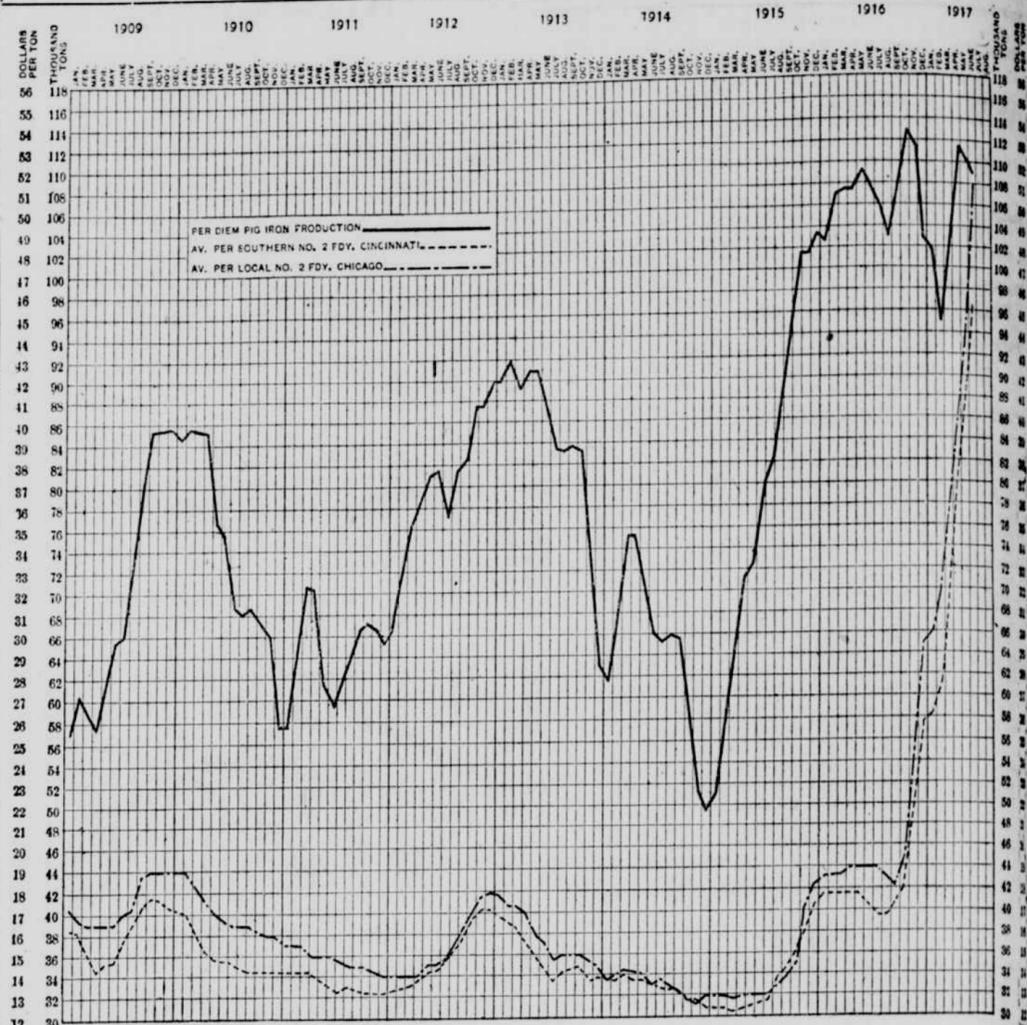
### Western Kansas A Doubtful Region

There are some crop failures in America, but they are almost strictly confined to a particular region, that west of the 100° meridian and east of the Rocky Mountains. But because winter cold kills the winter wheat in Western Kansas, as it does

they are not the best workers at that. For the best farm workers are the mature men, above the age of the selective draft. To offset even this improbable loss there will be extra purchases of machinery, for the farmers have money and unusual credit this year. Moreover, farmers are raising their rates of pay to hired help from the hitherto prevailing \$30 to \$40 a month and board for an unlimited amount of hours of labor to \$50 and \$60 a month and far better accommodations, with ten hours a day labor and at least half a day off every week. The farm has begun to compete with the factory to get first class help. The war has set the farmhand free, and he will work better.

This is no matter of opinion or of desire. College students have been hired this year for as high as \$75 and keep; and though this is the maximum for a young man of farm experience and superior intelligence with machinery, it represents a general social effort by farmers to seize the opportunity to get high prices for big crops. Carpenters and mechanics are going out into the coun-

# STEEL PRICES MOUNTING AS PRODUCTION LAGS



This chart, reproduced by courtesy of "The Iron Age," shows the daily average output of steel during each month since the beginning of 1909, and the course of prices in the same period.

year gave to him his chance. He was released, and as he went out a neighbor remarked that high prices had cured even his laziness. The patriotism needs no comment. But the pride is leading to an unusual neighborhood rivalry. The new day of statistics and of bookkeeping has set men to measuring their abilities against one another, and bigger crops result. Every man is going to show his neighbor what his farm can do when he tries.

The very failure of winter wheat upon the plains has caused far more spring wheat to be sown in the Middle West.

### No Real Cause For Hysteria

Men raise crops; the soil itself does not raise them. The hysteria that has visited a few centres of trade and that saw a year of famine ahead will serve the fairly useful purpose of awakening the indifferent. It had no basis in the facts of the American crop situation.

We raise corn in every state, hay in every state, wheat in forty states,

oats in almost as many. Never were there so many apple trees planted and in bearing this very year. We have far more knowledge than ever before of the soil and climate peculiarities that lead to great crops of sugar beets and of potatoes. Never before have we known so much, and had the knowledge so widely diffused, as to soil fertilizers. Never before was the ratio of men and women of mature years to the total population so great as now.

In all but two states of the Union men exceed women in numbers, and

the total excess is two millions more. Never did any nation enter into a war of magnitude so well prepared in the essentials of food products and of men to spare for battle. It is true that in a sense these are but the lower aspects of the matter; but our enemies in our midst, as well as our enemies abroad, should not be able to stir into fear a sensible man or woman upon any legations that we shall not spread in abundance and much a bread when the harvests are gathered in the autumn of 1917.

# Railroad Coordination

By A. V. ARRAGON  
(From an article in *The Journal of Political Economy*)

THE necessity for common action in the various branches of railroad direction and operation has led to the establishment of a large number of committees and associations for uniting matters of policy and for solving questions that affect all the roads. These committees are advisory in character, but their work is of material interest to the public from the standpoint of the efficiency of the transportation system. Such bodies are: the Railway Executives' Advisory Committee, the Association of American Railway Accountants, the Car Service Commission of the American Railway Association, the American Railway Engineering Association, and similar societies and committees, temporary and permanent, covering every phase of railroad operation, including law, traffic, finance, engineering and accounting. Would it not be advisable, in order to correlate the work of all these organizations, to bring them into legal and governmental recognition and to give them carefully defined powers of executive action?

# Elusive Profits

Much has come to the surface in recent months in this country to dip into a large measure the popular impression that the war munitions industry has produced enormous profits for all manufacturers who entered the field. Paper profits have in many instances been found to be actual losses when the contracts were completed. In Canada, where the munitions business has assumed huge proportions of late, there has also been a general belief that great fortunes have been built out of the profits derived from the manufacture of implements of war. But the Canadian Manufacturers' Association has a different view of the matter, which was presented in a report submitted to the annual convention of the organization held in Winnipeg.

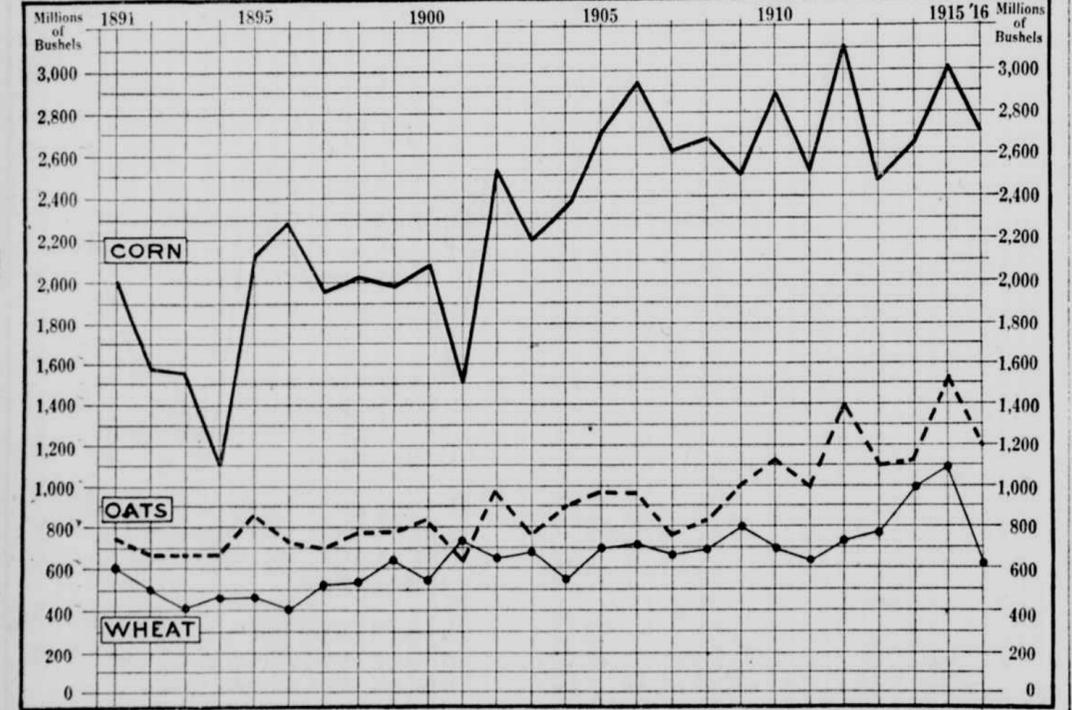
# Lack of Yarn Cripples Dutch Textile Factories

Frank W. Mahin, United States Consul at Amsterdam, Holland, writes as follows: "Reports from the textile factories in this district are to the effect that the situation has become grave owing to the continued and increasing lack of yarn. The Dutch spinning mills produce only warp yarn for the open market, and not enough of that for the local demand, and consequently the weaving factories must import all the woof yarn and a large part of the warp yarn that they require. But even the limited production of warp yarn is threatened with extinction because no cotton is coming to Holland.

# Wood for Fuel from Our National Forests

To meet any possible coal shortage in the West next winter more extensive use of fuel wood from the national forests is urged by the government's foresters. The supervisors of 153 national forests will afford all possible facilities to local residents wishing to obtain cordwood, which settlers may obtain free for their home use and which is sold at low rates to persons cutting and hauling in order to sell to others.

# A QUARTER OF A CENTURY OF FOOD HARVESTS



By way of example, those who are responsible for the financial success of the railroads condemn the unscrupulous financial practices of certain roads. The effect of these practices upon the minds of the investing public they recognize as hurtful to the marketing of railroad securities; yet they are powerless to prevent the continuance of them. Would it not be wise to give this advisory committee of railway executives, or some similar body, power to control the rules of finance for the transportation system of the country under the proper supervision of a governmental board?

The problem of utilizing railway equipment most effectively, upon which the Car Service Commission is engaged, has likewise been rendered exceedingly difficult of solution because that commission does not have the power to enforce its findings. In the whole field of transportation there are similar features which could be advantageously brought under central control without incurring the dangers of centralized management for all matters.

Railroad coordination on this plan would not involve an overturning of the present transportation organization, but would supplement it by an authorized general organization governing general policies. It is a system which would in the least degree change the present one, being in large part a recognition of existing agencies of centralization.

The danger of developing too centralized a system of governmental supervision would be avoided by the creation of the Federal regional commissions. Local considerations and interests would thus be given due weight, but the conflicts and discriminations arising under the present dual system of Federal and state control would be eliminated.

The critical need is raw cotton from the United States and cotton yarn from England. Neither is now coming to the country, and apparently is unobtainable at present. All space on steamers from the United States is now reserved for foodstuffs or other necessities of life. Without the needed raw materials the factory employees, numbering about 10,000, will be thrown out of work.

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It is further noted that not more than 25 per cent of the Canadian munition manufacturers have made any profits out of this line of business. Those who have made money, the report says, have done so because of their efficiency.

The Australian Federal Ministry is considering, according to "The Melbourne Age," a scheme providing an expenditure over a term of years of at least \$10,000,000 for the establishment of factories under joint private and government supervision. The scheme includes the creation of a national industrial department.