TANKS TO RECLAIM THE FARMS OF FRANCE

A good deal has been written about the rebuilding of the destroyed towns and villages in the battle-ravaged area of northern France, and it is also encouraging to record that a good deal of tangible progress has been made toward getting started with this part of the restoration work as soon as there is opportunity to do so.

Ever since the battle of the Somme was well under way I have been reading in French, English, and American newspapers, and reviews, articles, or letters—several from not "un-eminent" scientists and engineers—all purporting to demonstrate beyond the peradventure of a doubt that the once fertile agricultural region of northern France could not but remain an absolute desert, so far as agricultural production is concerned, for anywhere from a minimum of two or three decades to half a century and more.

Practically all of the more "learned" of these theorists appeared to base their beliefs on the poisoned-soil or debiliated-soil ideas. None of them—so far as I remember—claimed to have made any study of the question in the battle area itself. If they had—especially during the last summer—they would have seen a few things calculated radically to alter their opinions. Never under the hand of the husbandmen have the fields of northern France brought forth such a wealth of verdure as this last summer, and the fact that most of this growth consisted of wild flowers and weeds was merely because nothing else had been planted in their stead. Trenches, used and disused, were clothed to their parapets in a dense mass of rank vegetation, and the only shell holes which were not half submerged in greenery were those which had been formed within the month.

The physical problem of cultivation is, however, quite another matter. I must confess that when I first saw the condition in which the ground about Thiepval, Fricourt. Contalmaison, Pozieres, and a dozen other bitterly fought-for points in the Somme area, had been left, I was so appalled by the sight that, for the moment, I was inclined to share the views of the many who were saying that no practicable way ever would be found for putting it under cultivation.

It was not until the day I met a Canadian officer, who (like myself) owned a western ranch and had broken up new land with a tractor that a solution of the problem suggested itself.

"The danger from unexploded shells is practically negligible," said he, "for the simple reason that a detonator that has failed to go off at the end of a five or ten mile flight through the air is not likely to be greatly disturbed by a prod from a plowshare. Neither will buried barb wire give much trouble for any length of time. Railroad iron, concrete fragments, corrugated-steel roofing and other heavy trenching material will have to be picked up and carted off bodily.

"All of this leaves," he continued, "the discovery of a practicable way of effecting the first rough cultivation as the one great problem to be solved. The question then narrows down as to what sort of a machine will have to be devised to accomplished this preliminary work. . . . And right there you have the answer to those who are asking what is to be done with the thousands of tanks that will be left 'without occupation' at the end of the war. Use them for tractors to draw specially devised plows and harrows in the first rough cultivation of the crater areas. The extent of the fought-over ground which is too torn up to be cultivated in the ordinary way can hardly run to more than a few hundred square miles at the outside, and ten times as many tanks will be available as would be necessary to give this a complete going over in a fort night or so. The nature and design of the implements to be drawn would have to be determined by experiment, but there is no reason why these should not be initiated at once, so that whatever types are determined on could be built and ready for use as the first opportunity."—By Lewis R. Freeman, in the March Popular Mechanics Magazine.

The Plow as Mighty as the Sword

Although it calls for many sacrifices the war will have its compensations. Necessity will prove to be the mother of progress as well as of invention. We are already beginning to learn that more may be accomplished collectively than by individual effort; that in unity there is strength and that strength comands while weakness obeys. With the winning of the war will come greater opportunity. Cooperation is the key to the door. Communities dependent upon the soil must work in concert with the soil. That which an individual may not be able to do several persons working together may easily do. And that which may be done should be done—not for material gain alone, but from patriotic duty as well. To win the war our country and our country's allies need the product of every acre of land as well as the loyalty of every man and woman. We must not only supply food, but we must produce enough food. Victory depends as much upon bread and meat as upon guns and munitions. The plow may prove to be as mighty as the sword.

Let us see that every acre of our soil is loyal. Let every community cooperate with the farmers. Should the individual be unable to prepare and plant his land the community will be able. Let it cooperate. If not for its own sake, then for liberty's sake. There may be much more depending upon it than we know. Let every tillable acre enlist without delay. The country calls. Every community should answer, "Here!" Exchange.

Rotation of Crops

In nature we find if we will investigate carefully that rotation of plants is provided to a considerable extent. Along roadsides or by ditches it has often been observed that certain plants will thrive for a year or two then perhaps some other weed more persistent or by accident get a start and crowd out its rival. For instance, it has often been noticed that sweet clover has followed other plants in neglected fields, then after a few years another kind of plant usurps the ground and grows luxuriantly following.

Our virgin lands need no rotation for most of the land because different crops grow on the same land at the same time. Where farmers grow one crop on the same land for several years the land is likely to fail to produce to its former standard of yield. A change is much to be desired for future crops.

The object of rotation is to utilize the land to the best possible advantage to produce maximum yields. In striving for a maximum yield the condition, tilth and fertility for future crops must be carefully considered.

Those who have made careful experiments find that soils often contain organic substances that are harmful to plants. The same substances are not equally harmful to all crops, but may be especially detrimental to some kinds of plants that secret toxic material. By changing the crops such harmful substances may be rendered less harmful.

The following advantages while by no means all are well worth considering when rotation is planned.

Labor is conserved by systematic rotations. Rotation enables the manager to distribute labor and thus utilize his equipment to better advantage than if but one or two crops were grown. Control of weeds may be accelerated by rotation; danger of plant diseases reduced. Different plants have different adaptations. By rotation plants having deeper or shallower roots may be grown thus benefiting soil for future crops. Rotation helps maintain better tilth and most of all if intelligently practiced, increases the yield.—Farm and Ranch.

GRINDING FEED.

Since grains for feeding have advanced in price till those who for any reason must buy find it very expensive, farmers are thinking seriously of ways and means of making their feed more efficient. That is, they want as much gain liveweight—beef, pork, mutton, poultry, milk, and butter fat as can be produced with a given amount of feed.

While much will depend upon the animals to be fed something may be gained by making the feed more palatable and nutritious. One way to improve the nutritive value of grains for certain animals and under favorable conditions is to grind the grain.

It has been proved that grinding corn increases its feeding value about six per cent under certain conditions. This increase is not sufficient, however, to warrant a farmer's sacking the grain and haluing it to town or to a neighboring farm to be ground, states Dr. R. H. Williams, animal husbandman of the University of Arizona Agricultural Experiment Station. On the other hand, where one already has a good grinding outfit of his own and can perform the work at home without extra labor grinding may be desirable for the hard grain such as corn, millet, Kaffir corn, milo maize, wheat and barley.

The principle involved in grinding grains is to pulverize the food materials so that the eliminate it. Thus, grinding completely and also to save animal the work and energy required to digest and eliminat eit. Thus, grinding grains enables an animal to consume more roughage or bulky foods. Where maximum results are desired without regard to the cost, grinding grains may assist one in reaching this end. If one wishes to force dairy cows for a high record of milk and butterfat or obtain maximum gains with show cattle or hogs, ground grains, although expensive, may be used. Old animals, dairy cows and hogs, and horses that are being worked hard sometimes make grinding profitable, but the extra cost of preparing the food for sheep, beef cattle and idle horses will not pay for grinding the ordinary grain. It is well to remember that better returns will be made from feeding a balanced ration to livestock than any other method of feed preparation, such as shelling corn, grinding, soaking and cooking grains or chaffing hay.—Farm & Ranch.

ST. LANDRY COUNCIL OF DEFENSE.

The St. Landry Council of Defense met on Wednesday, Feb. 6th, 1918, with the following members present: Mr. E. M. Boagni, Chairman; Dr. J. A. Haas, Mr. Charles Thibodeau, Mr. J. G. Lawler, Mr. Leon Wolff, Rev. M. A. Grace, Dr. C. A. Gardiner, Mr. John Thistlethwaite, Mr. A. W. Dejean and Supt. W. B. Prescott.

Mr. Lawler, duly seconded, moved that the reading of the minutes of the last meeting be dispensed with and that the minutes as published be adopted. Carried.

Dr. Gardiner, duly seconded, moved that a committee of five be appointed to confer with the Police Jury at its next meeting with the object of placing a license on all dogs of the parish. Carried. The Chairman appointed the following committee to go before the Police Jury at its next meeting: Dr. A. C. Gardiner, Mr. Charles Thibodeau, Mr. J. P. Savant, Mr. A. W. Dejean, and F. P. Martin.

Mr. Lawler, duly seconded, moved that the parish and municipal authorities be sent copies of the vagrancy resolution passed by the Council of Defense and that they be asked to see that these laws be immediately and conscientiously enforced. Carried.

Mr. Thibodeau, duly seconded, moved that the Chairman appaoint a committee to call upon the Mayor of Opelousas and request him to convene the City Council in special session to take action to suppress women of ill-repute and vagrancy in the City of Opelousas, and that the Mayor be requested to notify the members of this committee as to the date he has fixed for the meeting. Carried.

The Chairman appointed on this committee the following members: Mr. Charles Thibodeau, Mr. J. G. Lawler and Dr. J. A. Haas.

On motion the Council adjourned to meet on Wednesday, Feb. 27th, 1918, at 3:30 P. M.

Unsinkable Transports

Hopeful as Americans are for an antidote for the submarine, will accept with reserve the announcement of Mr. W. L. Saunders, vice-chairman of the naval consultation board, that an unsinkable transport has been found. Mr. Saunders declared at a banquet in New York on Saturday there could be no harm in giving this tremendous secret to the American people.

But a burnt child dreads the fire, and it will be recalled that once before Mr. Saunders was responsible for a cruel deception of the country.

It was he who, at the outbreak of the war, startled the world with the announcement that American genius had invented a foil for the U-boat, that the problem of how to overcome it had been solved and that it would promptly disappear as a factor in the war.

As events proved, there was no substantial foundation for the sensational announcement, and Mr. Saunders was generally criticized for having assumed to make it without consultation with government authorities or the board of which he is a member.

So when Mr. Saunders tells the country the unsinkable transport has been discovered, people will do well to wait for a practical demonstration of the truth of the statement before giving way to elation over what again may prove another cruel disappointment.—New Orleans Daily States.