

The Nation's Business

(A Series of Articles by National Leaders Published Exclusively in This Territory in The Herald.)

"The Goal of the Future Farmer," by H. C. Taylor, chief of the Federal Bureau of Markets.

Editor's Note—H. C. Taylor, chief of the Bureau of Markets for the United States Department of Agriculture, is both a scientific and "old-fashioned" farmer. While his years of specialization and intensive study have given him a wide background on which to base theory and practice, he has also undertaken the task of understanding the actual conditions which confront the American farmer. He is recognized as one of the men who will light the way for the American agriculturist to a future of greater production and ever reducing overhead.

The American farmer is now passing through a barren and inhospitable waste, a sort of Death Valley among his landmarks. Having been through such experiences before, we may confidently count on coming through, as we always have in the past, but we are living in a fool's paradise if by that token we hope to come out at the same place we went in. We might as well admit once for all that the "good old times" of American agriculture, the free and easy times of cheap land, continually advancing in price, are gone forever.

The change of base was inevitable. Henceforth, instead of an agriculture conducted loosely, with one eye on the increment in land value, we must have a tight and rational agriculture, based upon sound agronomy and animal husbandry, and a knowledge of the cost of production and of market conditions. Henceforth we must conduct our farming operations so that they will yield profits on a farming basis, rather than as a side line in a speculative deal in real estate.

This being the situation, what of the outlook?

Worst Is Past.

From the purely economic side the outlook is dark enough, though there is reason to believe that the worst is now past. The consuming public seems to have no conception of the plight in which the farmer has been left by the slump in farm prices. All that the consumer knows is that retail prices have not come down to anywhere near the pre-war level, and he may assume that the farmer is still getting high prices, when, as a matter of fact, he is getting smaller net returns for his products than he got in 1913, and in dollars that will buy only about half as much per dollar as would his 1913 dollars.

Take a concrete example. The U. S. Department of Agriculture has made an annual analysis of the business of 100 representative farms in central Indiana for the past eight years. In 1913 the average net income of these farms, the return for both labor and capital, was \$1,593. In 1920 the net income was only \$1,269. However, this falling off does not measure the actual decline in the farmer's income, for in 1920 wholesale prices of commodities other than farm products averaged more than two-and-a-half times as high as the corresponding prices in 1913. That is, it took at least \$2.59 of this 1920 income to buy what a dollar would have bought in 1913. Consequently by over \$200, and a dollar shrunk to forty cents, the average

1920 income of the group of farms in question would buy not more than one-third as much as would the average for 1913. On this basis, the situation looks something like this:

1913:	Farm income _____
	Buying power _____
1920:	Farm income _____
	Buying power _____

Since the current year, thus far, certainly has been no more favorable to the farmer than was 1920, we may gain from the plight of these Indiana farmers a fairly good idea of the plight of the American farmer at large. It should be borne in mind in this connection that the above comparisons are drawn on the basis of wholesale prices, that the farmer customarily buys at retail and sells at wholesale, and that retail prices are still relatively very much higher than wholesale prices. It is also important to note that, though wholesale prices have fallen since 1920, the prices of farm products have fallen much farther than those of other commodities. With these facts in view, it is clear that we have not shown the condition of these Indiana farmers in its worst possible aspect. Some farmers have doubtless done better in the past year and a half than have these men; many especially in the South, certainly have not done so well. On the whole, I think we may say that the above is a conservative statement of a representative situation.

Is it possible to glean any comfort from such a situation? From the strictly economic standpoint it takes very close study of the price curves, and perhaps a bias toward optimism, to detect signs of improvement, but it begins to look as though the farm price curve has dipped as low as it is going on this swing.

More Optimistic.

There is another point of view, however, from which the outlook is more definitely encouraging. If we turn for the time from the cold, statistical viewpoint, and consider the situation from that of human life on the farm in its relation to what we call economics, we find that the situation holds promise strangely in contrast to the present unhappy conditions. It may sound paradoxical to say that the economic crisis through which we are now passing promises in the long run to make for better farm homes and a higher standard of living on the farm, but there is an aspect in which our present loss seems to foreshadow decided gain in that respect.

We are all familiar with the farmer, of that type so common in the past, whose only idea of efficiency is to rob the soil to the limit, and whose only idea of a way to use profits is to invest them in more land, and still more land. Strangely enough, this course, which would seem to lead at least to financial prosperity, serves to defeat its own end. The continual effort to invest farm profits in more land tends to bid up the price of land beyond the level justified by return from the land, and thus to increase the cost of

production by increasing the charge for the use of land. At the same time the effort to justify the investment tends to increase production, irrespective of market demands. Thus we have a vicious circle about which the farmer chases the will-o'-the-wisp of profit, only to find that his effort has increased the price of land and lowered the price of the products of the land. The day of this kind of farming is about over. The farmer of the new day knows that such tactics are those of the dog chasing his tail; that in effect they serve to put him in competition with himself, and that they lead periodically to agricultural depression. He knows that farming is a fundamental industry, that the laborer is worthy of his hire, and that he is entering upon an era in which sound agronomy and sound business practices must prevail over the haphazard methods of the soil-exploitation era of American agriculture. Knowing this, he will realize that the steady flow of profit necessary to the successful prosecution of his business and the happiness of his family will depend on the way in which he gauges his production with reference to demand, and on the efficiency with which he grows and markets his products, rather than on his skill or luck in handling real estate.

Slump Brings Good.

From this viewpoint, at least, the agricultural slump is not an unmixed evil, since its tendency is to shake out of the running the type of farmer whose influence has tended to keep down the prices of farm products and lower the standard of living on the farm. To the progressive farmer, who certainly has been hard hit by the slump, this may seem poor consolation now, but as the situation develops it seems likely that the advantage will swing more and more to his side. The farmer who is fitted to cope with the new situation is the farmer who is able to adjust himself promptly to the new conditions, and who sees that, in the long run, the cause of agriculture and of rural life in general is served by maintaining or raising the standard of living on the farm, rather than by using all surplus profit to bid up the price of land when there are more bidders than the profits of the soil will justify.

After all, better living is the true goal of the farming business. There is no more biting commentary on our modern life than that cynical aphorism to which it has given currency—"business is business." That business should become "its own synonym," as some one has put it, is a shameful thing, and the farmer who thinks of the farming business as having no object beyond mere financial success is in a fair way to miss the best of life.

There is a great class of forward-looking farmers in this vicinity who know better than that. We may rest assured that these men, in working out the vexing problems that the agricultural slump has spawned, will not be so foolish as to forget that the question of the financial future of American farming in inextricably connected with the question of better living in the farm home and the farm community.

FIRST PLAYED IN IRELAND

Croquet Made Its Way From That Country to England, and From Thence to America.

The first treatise on croquet that came to our little village was by Mayne Reid. The book was first published in London in 1863; there was a New York edition in 1865; a Boston edition in 1866. Some of the boys, disdainful the mallets on sale, had them made of fancy but heavy woods. The first stakes were tall, thick, with gorgeously colored rings to match the balls. The game encouraged flirtation among the older players. Young women were coquettish in putting a foot on the ball and saw to it that they were handsomely shod.

Was croquet a development of the Dutch game, closh, or did it pass from Brittany into Ireland? It certainly was played in Ireland before it was popular in England, writes Philip Hale in the Boston Herald. It has been stated that it was played near Dublin under this name in 1834-5. The game and name were introduced into England in 1852. In 1858 a writer in Field said croquet came into the north of Ireland some twelve years before from a French convent. Trollope's Mr. Crobble played croquet in 1862. In 1877 an Ivory turner of London, one Dickson, remembered having made a set of croquet implements for Ireland forty years before.

The game went out of fashion in the country when lawn tennis became the rage. The men that persisted in croquet were suspected of being passionately addicted to soda lemonade. There was at least a revival, with grand tournaments and strutting champions. Herkimer Johnson tells us that summer cottagers at Clamport play as ardently even when it rains and the whacking of the wooden balls often distracts him from the investigation of sociological problems.

Trinket Has History.

Elizabeth Irving, granddaughter of Sir Henry Irving, and herself a favorite of the English stage, wears a charm which her distinguished grandfather always wore on the first night of a new production. The charm has an interesting history and is said to have been worn by Mrs. Siddons and Peg Woffington.

Tempus fugit, and the up-to-date youngster of today may be the old-fashioned man of tomorrow.

When a chap is in love with that kind of a girl, at least two people know that red hair is auburn.

Investigators find that a woman can be clothed for \$28.75 a year, but can they find a woman who is willing?



Is The Public Buying?

Many dealers, many manufacturers, will tell you no. Hard times, no demand, buyers' strike—it is an old, old story.

And yet—

The public is eating.

The public is working and playing.

The public is clothed.

A man may wear his last year's overcoat turned. But the day comes when it is beyond restoration. He may have his old shoes repaired. But mended shoes don't last forever.

He can put off buying just so long. Then he is forced to buy. And it isn't a question of whether he will buy, but how and where he will buy.

That is the situation facing the retail merchant today. The public IS buying. Not, it is true, as it bought year or two ago. Not extravagantly or wastefully; but carefully, thoughtfully. Buying so as to get the most for its money. Buying by trade-mark—buying through advertising.

Advertising protects the buyer. It is his guaranty of quality and his price protection. And because that is true it is the most important factor today in influencing public buying decisions.

It is a wise merchant who recognizes that fact—and acts upon it. Who advertises consistently today, not only to swing present-day sales but to clinch future business. Who realizes that the man wearing half-soled shoes today will be buying new shoes tomorrow, and that advertising is going to determine whose shoes he will buy when he does buy them.

It is a wise merchant who definitely establishes his name with a great buying group like the Alliance and Box Butte county public through a medium whose 2,000 circulation, reaching many more readers, is the most effective force in influencing the decisions of Alliance and Box Butte county buyers.

ALLIANCE HERALD

First With Discriminating Buyers.

It Saves Steps

No Inconvenience With Christmas Bundles If You Use OUR Service

Alliance Shoppers will have a real metropolitan messenger service—at less than metropolitan prices. There is no need lugging bunglesome bundles with you when you go from store to store, just have the store call the

QUICK MESSENGER SERVICE

Try it once and see if you don't believe it worth twice the charge we make.

Merchants will find it gives prompt and efficient service to customers. It will give you an ideal manner of caring for the holiday trade. It's cheaper and more reliable than the kids.

OUR PRICES

Bicycle Service:	Car Service:
Under 10 blocks ---15c	Under 10 blocks ---25c
Over that distance ---25c	Over that distance ---35c

Quick Messenger Service

McCormick & Burnworth, Props.

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