

# North Dakota Farmers Purchase Lands Foreclosed by State

## PROFITABLE CROPS MAY SHOW DECREASE IN STATE'S HOLDINGS

State Now Holds More Than 200,000 Acres of Arable Land Ready for Tillage

POPULATION SHOWS GAIN

Farms Will Go Far Toward Paying Purchase Price With One Average Crop

The state of North Dakota is the unwilling owner of more than 200,000 acres of land, all arable and under cultivation.

These 200,000 acres, which in themselves constitute a fair-sized patrimony, are in addition to the millions of acres held by the state for the public schools and the various educational and eleemosynary institutions, and have reverted to the state through foreclosure proceedings.

This acreage is not increasing. In fact, it is decreasing rapidly, and with a good and profitable crop it will diminish as farmers obtain enough money to secure it by the one-fifth of the purchase price required. Those tracts that have been sold, and which are now being sold under deed or contract, are going, in large part, to the same men who were unable to keep them in their own hands in the first instance.

Through the Bank of North Dakota the state holds 121,728 acres of foreclosed land, and approximately 80,000 acres under the supervision of the land commission, likewise taken because the original purchaser was unable to meet the payments he had promised.

**Holdings Decrease**  
The state has sold, through the Bank of North Dakota, 75,930 acres, cutting its original holdings from foreclosure from the former high figure of 197,658 acres.

Farmers of the state apparently have faith in Dakota, according to the figures given out by the Bank of North Dakota, the land commissioner and the commissioner of immigration. All declare the largest number of sales has been to Dakota farmer residents.

A feature of many of the purchases is that they have been by fathers and mothers who are setting up sons and daughters as farmers on adjoining lands. Especially has this been true, it is said, among the thrifty Russian and German farmers west of the Missouri river.

"Five years ago," A. B. Cox, of the Bank of North Dakota, explained, "we had a lot of land lying in the counties west of the Missouri. But the thrifty Russian and German farmers have bought up so much of it we have little left in that part of the state."

The greatest number of tracts taken in foreclosure proceedings lie

in Burleigh, Bottineau, Renville, McHenry and Ward counties, although there are holdings in practically every county in the state.

**Average \$24 an Acre**  
Value of the lands held averages about \$24 an acre. This amount includes improvements on the land, in some cases listed as fencing, houses or barns, and in others, as complete equipment except machinery.

Practically every acre owned by the state because of foreclosure is adaptable to cultivation, and much of it is planted to "mike" crops. All of it is rented or leased this year, much of it to the men who formerly owned it. The crops on the state land include wheat, oats, flax, barley, speltz, corn, potatoes and rye.

Although the amounts of land in the holdings vary, they average 250 acres to the tract. There are approximately 500 parcels of land under lease today.

**Promises Good Yields**  
The rental required by the state through the Bank of North Dakota is one-fourth of the crop, delivered at the elevator, without expense or charge to the state. Although the rentals all over the state are good, Mr. Cox said, those in the northwest part of the state are especially valuable, yielding enough rental to pay the interest on the original loans on the same tracts.

One of the developments watched with special interest this year is the breaking up of new ground and sowing it to flax. This crop promises to be especially good this year, and promises to bring two dollars a bushel above the threshing charges. If the crop turns out well, Mr. Cox said, a great deal of the state land may be sold.

A farmer can go far toward paying for his land with one good crop, it was explained. The average price of a quarter section is \$1,000. The first year the farmer can break and sow 100 acres of new land to flax, and that acreage will net him about \$1800. The following year he can put the remaining 90 acres in flax, and the 100 acres he put to flax the year before, he can sow to wheat, plant to corn or potatoes, or some other crop.

In five years time, it is said, a man can make his living from a quarter section, and at the same time pay for it. Or, if he has other holdings that will pay for his living expenses, he can just about make the land pay for itself in two average years.

Of the land held by the state under the jurisdiction of the land commissioner, 22,990 acres are to the credit of the institutions, and have reverted to the state. Compared with the millions of acres in original holdings, this amount seems small.

**Terms Are Good**  
This land is not segregated, except for the purposes of bookkeeping, from the other state land, and is handled by the same board. The foreclosed land is leased by the board on the same basis as that originally owned and never sold by the state. Likewise, the foreclosed land may be bought from the state either at private sale or at auction.

If sold at private sale, the purchaser pays cash at its foreclosure price, plus five per cent interest to the date of purchase. If he buys at auction, however, he can buy the land on time payment at not less than its appraised value; one-fifth cash and the balance in deferred payments, not to exceed 20 years. One-fifth of the purchase price is due and payable every five years until the entire

amount is paid. The unpaid portion bears interest at six per cent. Part or all of the principal payments may be made at any time, and the interest on the amounts paid stops with the payment. All sales are made subject to existing leases.

**Many Seek Land**  
Many inquiries have come to the state, W. E. Byerly, land commissioner, explained in an interview, and residents of the state are just now beginning to learn that under the new law they can buy state land without paying a premium. As they become better acquainted with the procedure, he thinks, many more will become interested in land purchases.

Moreover, if the crops of the state are good this year, and the farmers receive a fair price, the board expects to dispose of a large number of parcels of land held under foreclosure. In many cases the land is leased by the men who formerly owned it, and they are especially interested in repossession. The board bases its opinion on the large number of inquiries that have come in from these former owners.

**Homeseekers Welcome**  
Although the commission must of necessity maintain rigid standards concerning leases and sales, Mr. Byerly declared, the board is interested in putting the tracts into the hands of home makers.

It would be greatly to the advantage of the state, it was said, to place the land in the hands of farmers and collect taxes, rather than for the state to own the land and lease it.

Over in the office of J. M. Devine, commissioner of immigration, a spirit of optimism pervades. Mr. Devine is a thorough believer in the state of North Dakota.

Within the last two years, Mr. Devine declares, farmer residents of Dakota have invested more than \$10,000,000 in land within this state, and have added this land to their own present holdings. The average price they have paid per acre is \$33.

In addition, he declares, settlers

from outside the state have come in to the number of 1,850 families since 1923, and have also invested more than \$10,000,000 in Dakota land. Their holdings average 200 acres to the person. The average price they have paid is \$30 an acre.

**Other States Interested**  
Iowa and Minnesota land dealers are concentrating on North Dakota, Mr. Devine said, because of the large crops, salubrious climate, and low price of land.

A statement of Mr. Devine's that startled, but which he proved to be true, is that manufacturers are growing in North Dakota as rapidly as the land purchases. Last year, he said, the state produced \$52,000,000 worth of manufactured products, and will naturally increase them as the population grows.

The things necessary are found, he said, in cheap coal, cheap land, healthful climate and a growing population.

The farmers and the officials of North Dakota have faith in the future of their state. The only thing the farmers lack is money to make the first payment on the land.

**Railroad Commission Prepares for Battle**  
The state railroad commission is preparing data for the hearing on the application of railroads for an injunction to prevent the new rates in North Dakota from becoming effective. The hearing will be in St. Paul July 2 before three federal judges.

The date for the order to become effective was set forward, Commissioner C. W. McDonnell explained today, to allow Commissioner Fay Harding, who has been attending the hearings of the interstate commerce commission in Washington, D. C., to be present; likewise the attorney general and the rate expert, as well.

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## STATE HAIL CLAIMS INCREASE THIS YEAR

Of 349 Filed During Week in Insurance Department, 206 Came From Adams

The number of claims for hail indemnity received by the state hail insurance department so far this year is only slightly larger than during the same period in 1928, according to records for the week ending June 21.

During the week 349 claims were received of which 206 came from Adams county, 44 from Bowman

county and 17 from La Moure county. In all 23 counties reported hail losses.

The number to date this year is 1,053 as compared with 979 for the same period in 1928. A comparison of the preceding week showed a much heavier proportion of losses in 1929 than had been recorded the previous year.

Hail losses reported during the week, for counties other than Adams, Bowman and La Moure, were: Benson, Burleigh, Divide and Pembina, one each; Golden Valley, Kidder, Oliver, Ransom, Sargent and Towner, two each; Slope, three; Mercer and Sheridan, four each; Williams, five; Burke, six; Cavalier and Logan, seven each; Dickey, eight; Sioux and Stark, 11 each.

**REAL MAN'S JOB**  
London.—Mrs. Bennie Gibbs, of Crossways Farm, Ingham, is said to be the only woman in England working at the art of hand brickmaking.

Her brickyard, which she inherited from her father after his death a few years ago, has an output of 500,000

bricks a year. She takes samples of her work around in an automobile to builders and architects.

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