Inured to Hardship. He Feels Himself to Be Better Off Than The City Man

In some parts of the Middle West the farmer has deserted to direct notice in his experience of hardship. Does this mean that farmers are better off now than before, or that they are considerably less depressed than in the following article? The author, an agricultural correspondent, has just completed a tour of the great farming areas of the West.

By BERNARD OSBORN

UT of the West come reports of farm strikes, of farmers' companies, of crop failures, of traffic in farm products until highly desirable, and they have been needed; of the withdrawal of crops from the market until the farmer gets his prices. There are vague rumors that a great agricultural uprising is brewing.

There is other evidence that might cast doubt on the theory that the farmers there is deep-seated dissatisfaction and material for revolt.

In counties in the Northwest growing a substantial proportion of the nation's wheat, when farmers are put up on a foreclose their suit, and their presence prevents any one except the mortgagee from bidding. Inthe property. Bankers, mortgage brokers, and other creditors have arranged to foreclose on homes of farmers have found, when forced to foreclose, that a silent conspiracy in the neighborhood keeps away any one from making a bid except the debtor, who then pays off the mortgage at the debtor's own price.

In Iowa it has become bad form for one to bid on a foreclosed farm or on chattels up for sale, and in Nebraska particularly, and in Iowa, it is very difficult for them to take over foreclosed property and find a chilly welcome among their neighbors, frequently augmented by a method of sabotage. Making a settlement secure against the old farm grievance with which the Populist revolt made the country familiar, has been regarded as being proposed. Railroads are undervalued, banks are overvalued, and the national banks are blamed because of absence of credit, and the Fed are supposed to be responsible for alleged restrictions in the discount and loan department. There are a great deal of self-circulated stories about ruthless and profitable foreclosures by joint stock companies. Farmers do not understand that these are private affairs, and they report that their neighbors have been broken by it. The farmers are being heartlessly evicted by credit institutions sponsored by the Federal Government.

Between these grievances, real and alleged, there are widespread discussions of radical measures for relief. The over-production bill is under consideration, and there is considerable talk of the idea that the key to the restoration of farm prosperity has been given up the ghost.

All this, when summed up, appears to indicate that a radical movement is in the making.

The discussion can be protracted on the issue of the advantages against the old idea of protection against the commodity exchanges, against crop price depressions, for making it appear in totality that the farmer needs the help of the wild and turbulent. But accurate as this recapitulation is in pointing out some of the main points of the needed picture. If there is a generalization, it is that the farmer is less self-satisfied than these trends would seem to indicate. He is more realistic about his position and in a favored position compared with the city man. Moreover, the farmer has become inured to the hardships of the depression. It is nothing new to him. He has been in a continuous depression since 1920. It may even be asserted that he has developed genuine economic protective devices and that adaptations to new economic conditions have materially reduced the rigors to which he has been exposed in consequence of the price decline. In fact, these changes in farming—such as diversification, lower cost of production, greater self-sufficiency and a shorter use of machinery—have already set in motion healing influences in the situation.

Because the farmer feels himself in a favored position compared with the city man and because he has more time to adapt himself to present conditions than is the case in organized revolt. What action there is in organized, isolated, abortive and certainly not general.

THE farmer has mellowed and become less self-centered. He is less a farmer than he used to be, and is more interested in the general welfare of his neighbors. He has become less of a farmer and more of a citizen. In the past year, or in many cases over the past year, he has become more interested in the welfare of his neighbors. He has become more interested in the general welfare of his neighbors. He has become more interested in the general welfare of his neighbors.

Mississippi—a meeting composed of a cone prosperous group of farmers, none for the most part had their farms because of interest de- mings—what they could do to assist the starving groups in New York City about whom they had heard so much.

It should be emphasized that they do not mean to imply that all is serene in the agricultural regions; that the farmer has no economic grievances about the depression, and that he may not give full expression to these grievances. Many farmers are discouraged and disheartened. They have not had the ability to express their grievances properly. They have not had the ability to express their grievances properly.

It may be said that the farmers in general are not in the mood to listen further to the siren song, nor are they willing to pay the price of the depression. The farmers, in the great reservoirs of the grandfathers of the great reservoirs, are not ready to pay the price of the depression. The farmers, in the great reservoirs of the great reservoirs, are not ready to pay the price of the depression. The farmers, in the great reservoirs of the great reservoirs, are not ready to pay the price of the depression.

NEVERTHELESS, farmers in all sections of the country seem to recognize that foreign markets must be found for a considerable portion of the American products, and that competition for these foreign markets American agricultural products must be sold at world prices.

With the exception of a brief period during the operation of the Federal Farm Board, the farmer has sold his commodities at world prices, and he now recognizes that he must compete to do so in the future. But during the past year, he sold farm commodities at world prices he paid inflated and for rejected prices for the things that he bought—his farm machinery, his clothing, his furniture, his processed food and even his hired labor.

From 1930 to 1939 his farm operations as a whole earned him no interest whatever on his own equity made a profit of $200 to $500 a year for his labor and that of his family, a return from which a savings would have turned...
NOW THE FARMER
FACES FACTS

He Feels That He Has a Few Advantages

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contempt during that period of high
wages. Since 1929 even these modest
earnings have been wiped out.
Price declines since then have put
all farming in an untenable posi-
tion. Present price levels are far
below cost of efficient production.
The farmer feels that the 1929 tariff,
in a large measure, was responsible
for this fresh disaster.

THE tariff is the issue that com-
mands the most widespread in-
terest of the farmers today.
Capricious critics and cynics might
here point out that the great
Agricultural States of the North
and Central States have always sup-
ported high tariff legislation; that,
in fact, without them many of the
tariff bills could not have been
sold; that the McKinley bill, the
Aldrich bill, the tariff act of 1922
and the Smoot-Hawley bill of 1929,
all had the support of the Con-
gressional delegations of the great
farming States. Even certain
Southern States continuously sup-
ported the tariff. The entire tariff
bill in the last quarter century
which reduced rates, the Under-
wood bill, was opposed by Con-
gressional delegations of the North
and Middle West.

One is at loss to account for
this divergence in political prac-
tice from economic needs. It is not
improbable that the vagaries of our
current political system may have
brought forth support of legislation
in direct opposition to the
interests of the farmers deemed to be
their best in-
terests. Nevertheless it appears at
this time that farm revolution any
will expand itself on an examina-
tion of customs levies that favor
in foreign trade and in domestic
cost of production for agricultural
commodities.

The farmers argue that, by tak-
ing from the farmer the proceeds
which he would otherwise re-

erate via the tariff, the urban
population has also impoverished
the own
interests, and that in a large
measure the industrial depression is the
consequence of the pro-
duction of the farmer’s purchasing
power. ‘’To end the depression we
must establish this purchasing power.’’
is the plea now made to the cities.
The farmer’s purchasing power can be re-established either by in-
creasing prices of farm products or by decreasing the cost of pro-
duction, or by both methods.

As to the possible increase in farm prices the farmers are
willing to take his chances in
the world markets. Already farmers
have had the feeling that prices are
relatively better position than was
it was ten weeks ago. In general,
prices have advanced 50 per cent.
Whet prices are sharply haggled,
while still below the cost of
production, have added millions of
dollars to the farm values of
the crop. Cotton has risen to a price
that has been thought that the entire
South Tobacco prices are above
those of last year. Together these
advances have added another
hundred million dollars to farm values.
The farmer is naturally pleased
by these rises, but they only slight-
ly mitigate his precarious financial
position. There is a feeling that
in more sober circles, that because of
the grave injuries imposed by the
tariff on the farmer, because of the
threatened large numbers of new
cultures if prices do not make further advances promptly, it may be just and wise to increase agricultural prices artificially, at
least for a while.

And the farmer puts forth the
captivating argument that the en-
lighted self-interest of the cities
should support him in his demand
for a sounder tariff, for a restora-
tion of world trade and for restored
farm purchasing power. These will
not only restore farm prosperity, he
holds, but general prosperity.