

## The Department of Agriculture "The Job and the Machine"

Frederick J. Haskin

Washington, D. C., April 12.—This war will be won in the wheat fields.

It will take man power and money power in full measure. Blood and treasure are the price of victory; the greatest of wars does not fail to call for its sacrifice. But behind the men who risk their lives, behind the guns that burn up treasure, there must be the mammoth, ceaseless flow of food for workers and fighters.

To see that the river of food flows in flood, to assure that there is enough for America and a lavish surplus for America's allies—that is one of the greatest problems that face the nation. The endless miles of rich farm land in this country and the efficiency of American farmers give good guarantee that the problem will be solved. But the quicker and the better the solution, the sooner the victory. Every extra bushel of grain that the nation can raise, every pound of meat the nation can save from the struggle and a saving of life. There is no task more important today than the production and saving of food. Every man, woman and child in America has a share and a duty in it.

In the warring nations of Europe there is government supervision of food raising, food buying and food cooking. Each nation has an elaborately organized government department to look after the matter. We are a long way from needing a food dictator in America; but we are in honor bound to a hungry world to raise and eat our food on a war basis. Moreover, we already have our government department, elaborately organized, to aid in the efficient production of food, to point out how it can be most economically distributed and eaten. That department is the Federal Department of Agriculture.

In the Department of Agriculture, with the state colleges and workers who co-operate with it, the United States has an establishment for the working out of agricultural problems—which means food problems—greater than that of any other three nations in the world combined.

The department today stands confronted by an immense task. In the next few months it will play a greater part in the life of the nation than ever before. It is far better fitted to play such a part than the vast majority of Americans realize. It has been growing and extending its activities at such a rate in the last few years that the public has hardly kept up with it. As the common center of organized American agriculture, the department is an asset not only to America, but to France, England, Belgium and the other nations who look to us for food, whose value can hardly be overestimated. This is a time for every American to understand just what the department is, what it is doing and what it can do, so that he will give due weight to its advice, and by intelligent co-operation help to solve the nation's problem in the most effective way.

The department is the largest scientific establishment in the world. In the last ten years, its working force has shot up from 6,000 men and women to 17,000. The work it does in plant and animal investigation is not surpassed anywhere. The effectiveness of that work is reflected in the efficiency of the average American farmer. We hear a great deal about

the remarkable efficiency of farmers in Belgium and Japan, where intensive cultivation is carried to a high degree, and the yield per acre runs large. But the yield per acre is not the test of efficiency in this country, where we have many acres and few farmers. The American farmer cannot afford to go in for intensive cultivation. His problem is to get the greatest possible yield, not per acre, but per man. Measured by this test, he is actually from two to six times as efficient as any other farmer in the world.

This efficiency, which is going to be taxed to the limit in the next year, is the result of several things—the amount of land at our disposal, the intelligence of American farmers as a class, the lavish use of labor-saving machinery, and not least to the scientific methods of cultivation as worked out by the department. The department has not only increased the yield of almost every staple crop, but it has sent out exploring parties and introduced from foreign lands crops fitted for American cultivation. It has worked out methods for tilling and marketing such crops. On the list are such well-known names as Durum wheat, navel oranges, Sudan grass, kafir corn, and a dozen others. The total annual value of these plants introduced from foreign lands is estimated at \$265,000,000.

In getting the results of its work before the people, the department continually faces a colossal task. It is an adviser with an audience of 100,000,000. In a single year it has distributed as many as 39,000,000 publications. Under the recently enacted Smith-Lever act, which provides for actual demonstration work on the farm by state and government agents, the department became at a stroke the largest single educational establishment in the world.

This extension of education, this nation-wide school whose students are men, women and children going about their work, is unique. There is nothing else like it anywhere. Already 1,300 counties out of the 2,850 counties in the United States are getting the benefit of it.

One of the biggest problems which face American agriculture is the annual loss through disease, both plant and animal. This annual loss is big enough to challenge the best efforts of the biggest agricultural department in the world. According to latest estimates the losses in crops and animals due to different diseases amounts to \$550,000,000 a year. That is enough to feed even a modern army quite awhile.

The department is already winning its fight with disease. For a single instance, there may be cited the case of Texas fever among southern cattle—a disease which closes to cattle raising great areas in the southern states, which are very well fitted for the business and thus strikes the nation's food production at the very root. The annual loss through Texas fever and the cattle ticks which carry it runs to \$40,000,000 a year. But the ticks and the fever have been eradicated from an area in the southern states larger than France or Germany, and that much land has been given back to beef production. There still remains an area twice the size

of Germany to be cleaned up, and the department looks forward to doing it in the next ten years. This gives some idea of the size of the problems that come up in a country as big as this one, and the way they are being handled.

The work of the department has widened to include a dozen other important branches. The federal aid road act puts the nation's road building largely under its supervision, with \$160,000,000 to be spent besides the immense amounts spent annually by the states. The study of the problems of marketing has grown in importance until it ranks with the study of production. Altogether the department, which in 1885 spent \$152,000 and had \$98,000, left over which it apparently didn't know what to do with—has just been granted appropriations totaling \$37,000,000, without including the road and extension funds. When these latter get into full swing in a few years, the department will have authority over the spending of about \$80,000,000 a year.

There are still Americans to be found, especially among city dwellers, who have the idea that the Department of Agriculture is a sort of superseed-distributing agency. As a matter of fact, it is the largest scientific and educational establishment in the world, it has the administration of thirty of the most important national laws in its hands, and working with its state co-operators, it is three times as effective in solving the problems of agriculture as the corresponding department in any other country.

The department is facing what may well prove the supreme test of its history. The food problem lies in its hands, whatever the future may bring forth. It will have much to say to the nation, to city as well as to farm, in the hard months ahead. And its sayings should be heeded. We have three cabinet officers whose departments are war departments today. They are the secretaries of war, navy and agriculture.

## Kaiser Expected at Castle Near Border of the Netherlands

London, April 14.—According to an unconfirmed report received at The Hague, Emperor William either has arrived at or is expected at the Castle of Middachten, near Arnhem, Holland, says a dispatch to the Times from the Dutch capital. The Castle of Middachten belongs to the Bentick family and the German emperor visited there some years before the war.

Arnhem, near which is situated the Castle of Middachten, is the capital of the province of Gelderland and is on the River Rhine, fifty miles south-east of Amsterdam. Arnhem is fifteen miles north of Cleves, the nearest German city, with which it is connected by a railroad. The German border reaches to within ten miles of Arnhem.

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## Spuds and Onions Usurp the Bed of Dainty Flowers

No more geraniums and asters to give beauty to the front yard, but instead the diamond-priced potatoes and onions will flourish in the flower beds of the resident districts. The home owners around Twenty-sixth and Saint Mary's avenue have come to the conclusion that in these high-cost-of-living days every inch of

available ground ought to be used to raise truck vegetables.

Come now William Kennedy of 543 South Twenty-sixth street, who spaded up a part of the back yard lawn in order to increase the garden area. But he did not stop there. Next he planted onions in the back yard flower beds and now he is thinking of doing the same thing in front.

The idea was welcomed by the other neighbors with the result that now the majority of back yards in that locality are already beginning to show signs of farming. One of the ladies of the neighborhood says that if the cost of vegetables keeps rising she will have the whole of her lawn

plowed up and planted into potatoes and beans.

## American Schooner Shelled by Subsea

Washington, April 14.—The American schooner Edwin R. Hunt of New

York was abandoned by its crew under shell fire from a submarine near Cape Gata, Spain, in the Mediterranean. April 7, according to a dispatch to the State department from Consul Cassetti at Malaga.

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