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THE EVOLUTION OF THE AMERICAN FAMILY FARM

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AMERICA was settled by people who were hungry for land. The nobility and the Church of Europe and of Britain, the mother countries, possessed the greater part of the limited land resources in those countries, making it difficult for the working classes to gain the use of land except as tenant farmers or as peasants on small subsistence tracts. That fact, however, did not prevent them from envisaging the advantages of landownership and sensing the feeling of independence and security that go with it. About the beginning of the nineteenth century tales began to creep back to them about the great land resources of the new country that could be had for the taking, or at most for a very nominal price. These tales stirred the imagination, spurred the ambitions, and stimulated many families to risk the dangers of crossing the Atlantic even though it involved six weeks of discomfort and risk on a sailing vessel instead of six days in safety and comfort on a palatial steamer as now.

If I may be pardoned for it, I should like to introduce an incident from my family history to illustrate the point. My grandfather Boss was a small contractor and builder living at Kinross, Scotland, getting his work from the country-side as work could be secured. My father, when seventeen years of age, had migrated to New York State where an uncle had established a business. I have at home a copy of a letter written to him by my grandfather in 1857, in which he recounts the small returns for his work, the difficulty of getting contracts, the impossibility of getting land at any reasonable price, and inquiring about prospects for getting land for himself and his other sons, should he come to America. I never saw the answer, but grandfather Boss later came to America, settling on a farm near Janesville, Wisconsin. My father established his home on a family farm in south-eastern Minnesota, while one of his brothers settled on a farm in Iowa and another on a California fruit ranch. History will recount thousands of similar family migrations in the quest for the privilege of setting up a farm with the expectation of gaining economic and social independence.

The farms established by these early immigrants were clearly of

the subsistence type. There was no thought of providing beyond the needs of the family for food, shelter, and clothing, or at least beyond the needs of the community, which in most instances was small and compact. There were no roads to market then and very few to the sea which offered the only outlet for surplus goods. To fill the cellars and store-rooms, to cure and dry meats, to tan hides into leather, to grow wool and linen for clothing materials, composed the budget of the farm family, though it was not dignified by the name 'budget' in those days. The more ambitious plantations and estates developed in the Virginias and Carolinas were nevertheless looked upon as family enterprises and set up for the support solely of the southern family and the surrounding, and to them necessary, slave labour.

Such was the picture of American agriculture for something over two centuries in which the family farm tradition became deeply embedded. New England land was rugged, stony, and covered for the most part with timber which had to be cleared away. The southland also presented many obstacles to rapid development of farms. The spade and the hoe, the brush harrow, the sickle and the flail, composed the list of common farm implements during much of the period. Hand labour was supplemented to some extent by the ox and the horse, but man power then was the most important asset to the successful family farm. The farm was the centre of family interest and welfare. Trade and commerce were of little concern to those on the land, and they were from 90 to 95 per cent. of the population.

The family farm has always dominated American agriculture. The modern farm of the Corn Belt, or of the Wheat or Cotton Belt, is quite a different institution from the family farm of early New England agriculture, but it is still a family farm. And it is even more dominant in determining the national income (and I might add in unbalancing the national budget because of agricultural subsidies).

Exploring parties began to break through the Allegheny Mountains to the west soon after the close of the Revolutionary War, thus bringing into view still greater quantities of land of better quality and more easily subdued. Labour to clear and operate farms was scarce, however, and progress was slow. There was a limit to the amount of land that could be prepared for crops by the farm family, and quite as strict a limit to the amount that could be harvested, even when supplemented by hired or slave labour. The sickle and the cradle were still the common implements for cutting the grain. Migration westward followed the opening of the so-called North-West Territory in 1785. A liberal land policy on the part of the

national government stimulated the movement and aided in the rapid settlement of the prairie regions which offered great quantities of first-class agricultural land.

Shortage of man labour stimulated an interest in machinery. The invention of the cotton gin in 1793 and the development of the cotton industry changed radically the types of farming in the south. Slavery was greatly extended to provide labour for the cotton fields. Cotton and tobacco, both export products, became the leading crops of the south. This change in the agriculture of the south also influenced farm life in the New England States. Because of convenient and abundant water power and the ability of the northern whites to operate machines better, cotton spinning and weaving mills were erected along the north sea-coast where water transportation could be secured. These mills bid strongly for labour and took not only sons but daughters of farmers for work in the mills. Thus began the shift from the family farm as a major interest in New England to the great manufacturing enterprises which make this a most noteworthy commercial centre of the present day.

Quite as important in the evolution of the family farm has been the invention of farm machinery. The reaper, invented and perfected in 1831–4, relieved greatly the drudgery of the harvest field and at the same time permitted the operation of much larger acreages. The manufacture about 1840 of steel mouldboard ploughs for turning the soil and the power-driven thresher in 1850 greatly influenced the agriculture of the northern and west central States where soil and climate were especially adapted to maize and other cereal crops. Greater use of horses and steam power, larger acreages, more machinery marked the forward march of the American farm. More capital investment, an increasing load of debt, interest and taxes trail its progress. More of its products found their way to market and across the seas, but it still held the interest and labour of the family; it was still a family farm, though the influence of commerce and trade was beginning to be felt by the middle of the nineteenth century.

The Federal Government has consistently encouraged land settlement and ownership as a measure for developing national wealth and security. The Pre-emption Act of 1841 and the Homestead Act of 1862 were so framed as to make it easy to gain possession of the land, with the proviso of course that it should then bear a Federal tax in support of the Government. The amount of land to be secured under these Acts was suited to what was thought to be necessary to support a farm family in comfort and plenty. The traditional

American farm is one of 160 acres. That is the amount provided for in the Acts before-mentioned. Many hold to the opinion that it is a sufficient amount. A more accurate view perhaps is that until the turn of the twentieth century it was as much as the average farm family could operate to advantage. At the same time, if well located in a favourable climate, it would support the family well. That the welfare of the family unit was the focal point of governmental interest is indicated by the fact that the acreage permitted has been varied from time to time as new areas have been opened up. The Homestead Act, under which the larger part of the Mississippi valley and the Great Plains area were settled, was supplemented by the Tree Claim Act granting an additional 160 acres on the treeless prairies on condition that an area of at least ten acres be planted to trees and cultivated to insure their growth. On the dry lands of the Plains States as much as 640 acres were permitted, and in the Ranch States the amount was doubled, permitting both husband and wife to enter claims. While the amount of land that could be taken has thus been varied from time to time and from place to place, the government objective always has been to encourage the family to take sufficient land to provide ample support and income.

The close of the Civil War in 1865 found the United States Treasury badly depleted. The returning soldiers were induced to take land scrip in payment for their service to the country. The scrip was exchanged for land, usually an acreage of homestead size. Thus was the financial situation met, the soldiers provided with employment, and the traditional family farm fostered. Thus was the stage set also for a period of over-production of cereal crops and a post-war period of hard times for farmers that was not overcome until the break of the present century.

The family farms of this period, however, were not of the true self-sufficiency type of the earlier periods. The invention and improvement of machinery had gone on at a rapid pace. The self-rake reaper of 1850 became the self-binding harvester by 1880, displacing four or five men in the harvest fields. Some of these were the sons of farmers who went to the factories to make more machines. The daughters, too, went to care for the sons or to be clerks or workers in the factories and offices. The invasion of business upon the family unit became significant. The steel walking plough was replaced by the gang plough with one man doing the work of two. The steam-engine replaced horse power for driving the threshing machines, thus enlarging again the capacity of the man unit in converting products from the soil into articles of commerce and directing them

into commercial channels. Labour which had always been a limiting factor could, when supplemented by machines, operate more land which up to the twentieth century had been a cheap surplus commodity. The self-sufficiency farm of the earlier period was no longer a satisfactory unit, particularly in the north central States where treeless prairie land could be quickly converted into first-class wheat and corn land. Competition from these new and larger farms was not without effect on the farms of New England and the eastern States. Unable to meet the competition of the western prairie States in the production of agricultural products, factories were built for their conversion into finer goods, thus further developing the manufacturing industries and stimulating the commercial phases of agriculture.

It was during this period that enterprising capitalists sought to build fortunes out of land exploitation. Prairie lands ready for the plough could be purchased at extremely low prices. Bonanza farms in the Dakotas and western Minnesota were organized especially for the production of wheat. These were operated by hired managers and fully equipped with modern machinery. These flourished for a short time, but eventually gave way to the less spectacular family farms, largely because the family was willing to forgo a high standard of living in the endeavour to acquire land. In other words, they were willing to work temporarily at least for less than the hired labourer's wages.

Competition for the good land resulted in price increases to a point where profits from wheat raising were extremely low. More intensive systems of farming were introduced calling for grasses and legumes to support more live stock. These, in turn, required more highly specialized care and management, the best source for which was found on the family farms.

The years 1900 to 1914 marked an era of steady improvement in the agriculture of America. It was during this period that agriculture came into balance with labour and capital, resulting in an equality of purchasing power which stimulated free exchange of goods. Data from the years 1910–14 inclusive have been used freely as the base from which to project comparisons of price indices and purchasing power. It was a period during which the 6¼ millions of American family farms were functioning at their best. And then came the World War which seriously upset the prevailing equilibrium towards which we have been seeking steadily for nearly twenty years to return.

The withdrawal of able-bodied young men from the farms to serve

in armies and navies shortened materially the farm labour supply. This shortage was offset to a large degree, however, by the introduction and use of more machinery. The improvement of the internal combustion engine, invented towards the close of the nineteenth century, and its adaptation as power for operating farm implements brought revolutionary forces into action. The merits of mechanized farms and large-scale farming were again advanced and commercialized production advocated. The displacement of horse power by gas-driven engines increased the capacity of the operator for handling more land and lessened his out-of-pocket costs for hired labour. The combine harvester and thresher displaced in a measure the self-binding harvester and separate threshing rigs, at least in the Corn Belt and Great Plains areas. Enterprising farmers, prompted by good prices for farm products, began to enlarge their farms and many of them their debts as well. Bonanza farms were again talked of, and some came into existence. One, of 150,000 acres, brought international prominence to its operator. Others, smaller and less advertised, brought more permanently satisfactory returns to the operators. Mechanized agriculture, chain farming, and co-operative ownership and operation were talked of in turn, but the Armistice, embarrassing surpluses, and finally the stock market crash and financial panic put an end to speculation and to further expansion in agricultural production. The family farm is again in the ascendancy, modified to be sure in form and equipment, but still a family farm. No longer can it be looked upon as self-sufficient in the old sense of the term. It can be made so if necessary, but at present the families for the most part prefer to operate on the exchange or commercial basis. Like most families in other social groups, they want variety in food beyond what the farm produces; they want store clothes rather than homespun, and get them; they want electric light, furnace heat, bath tubs, and running water; they also want educational and recreational privileges and as good a standard of living as others enjoy. To get these things, the products made must be marketable and salable. They must be converted into money which in turn may be converted into the articles wanted and needed for family use. Farming on the average American farm is now organized on a commercial rather than on a self-sufficiency basis, but it is still a family farm.

The degree to which the family farm has become commercial is suggested by accounting records kept by 150 dairy farmers in south-eastern Minnesota. The average gross cash income of these farmers for the years 1928 to 1935 inclusive was $4,057. The average cash

farm expense, including taxes but not including interest or principal payments, was $2,184. The average size of these farms is 192 acres, and the average capitalization nearly $21,000. These farms are larger and are probably operated more profitably than the average farm in this section. They are, however, all family farms, but operated largely on a commercial basis. They can hardly be classed as 'smallholdings' or 'peasant farms'. They are real business enterprises.

It is true that many of these farms are badly burdened with debt; that large areas are held by mortgage companies, trusts, and corporations; that tenancy is increasing at a rapid pace, particularly in areas of good agricultural land where price ranges are high. However, the fact remains that the land held by these interests is leased in moderate-sized tracts, and these tracts are operated by typical farm families. The sustained interest of the Federal Government in the family farm unit is reflected in more favourable farm credit institutions and facilities, lower interest rates on farm loans, and subsidies for soil-building practices.

One cannot always safely predict the future from the past, even when the past is much longer than that covered by American agriculture. Three hundred years is too short a time in which to mould the agriculture of a country possessing such widespread and varied land resources as America. There is nothing in sight, however, to justify the opinion that family farms are breaking down and will disappear. On the contrary, there is much evidence that serious thought and effort are being given to preserving these family units and to safeguarding the productive power of the land. For the past century farmers of America have been exploring the possibilities of the country. At the same time they have been exploiting the soil for what could be wrung from it. In this respect they are no worse than the capitalists who have exploited the forests, the iron and coal mines, the oilfields, and even the people, for private gain. Agriculture has been in flux as it is almost certain to be in any new country where the proportion of good land to population is so great and where an outlet for agricultural products can be provided. All America up to the present time has been chasing the dollars so easily won by the extraction and sale of accumulated natural resources. Lest some may be inclined to criticize America for this, I hasten to say that British, German, and Scandinavian cousins who have become United States citizens may be discovered right up in the front ranks of the dollar chasers.

The period of wanton exploitation is over. America is now

coming into a period of constructive development. More conservative land management, less wasteful cropping practices, better utilization of products raised, and improved organization and operating plans already mark present-day agriculture. Farm operators are rapidly accepting the findings of agricultural scientists and applying them in the management of their farms. The Federal Government, in the view that national safety and prosperity lie in keeping a fair proportion of the population on farms, is giving serious and sustained consideration to long-time plans which will reduce the risks and increase the incomes from the family farms that are likely to comprise our agriculture for a long time to come.

There will be adjustments in the family farm from time to time and from place to place as in the past. The size of the unit must be adapted to the type of farming followed and to the capacity of the family to operate it. The vegetable and small truck farmers need only 5 to 10 acres for an intensive family unit. The orchardist and fruit grower need 40 to 80 acres. The dairy belt farmer is content with 20 to 30 cows and 160 to 200 acres of land. The corn, beef, and hog raiser wants 240 to 320 acres, well stocked. The Kansas, Dakota, and Montana wheat growers must have two to four sections —1,280 to 2,560 acres—to provide employment for their heavy investments in modern power and machinery. The ranch man must have sufficient land to support a herd—400 to 800 or more—of breeding cows as the foundation of his farm. Yet these are all family farms in the true sense of the word.

I believe the family farm will persist in America; that it will be more intelligently operated than in the past; that the drudgery of manual labour will be lightened; that the income will be larger and more secure; and that the family interest and satisfaction in its possession will remain one of the great assets of the nation.

DISCUSSION

J. P. MAXTON, *Oxford, England.*

I think that this is an excellent paper by Professor Boss. Not only is it one of the pleasantest that we have listened to, but also behind it there is a touch of what I might call humanity which perhaps is sadly lacking in many of the papers which we have at our Conferences. In addition to that I think his point is exceedingly well made. He shows very clearly how this thing they call the family farm in America has continued to be called the family farm by Americans in spite of the fact that it is in reality no more the family

farm of four or five generations ago than the combine-harvester of to-day is the scythe, cradle, and flail of earlier times. Dr. Warren, of course, made much the same point in the course of his discussion on Thursday, but Professor Boss's account this morning puts the matter in its clearest light.

The point which I think we would have to discuss very seriously is this. It is all very well to go on calling it a family farm, and to say that that is essentially the unit. But Professor Boss points out very clearly to us that those farmers of to-day are expecting a very great deal more out of their farms than their ancestors were, even although both are called family farms. I should doubt very much whether they can get all those things which they want out of the farm unless they are prepared to do rather more than simply add on some more acres to meet the needs of a tractor, a thresher, or whatever it is that happens to be invented. It seems to me they will have to go to the stage of organizing labour, of having more labour on the farms, and using that in an adaptable and flexible way so as not only to get a bigger output per man but also to provide more leisure for the people who are working there.

I do not see how America can expect to maintain what seems to me to be rather a high standard of living which the family farmers are hoping to get out of those farms, without going to the extent of adopting what, when all is said and done, has been one of the biggest economies of modern economic development, namely, the organization and the dovetailing of the work of maybe five, ten, or twenty men to get the job done, instead of one man as on the family farms with perhaps one assistant trying to handle the whole thing himself with a little family labour. There is no flexibility about it. There are no opportunities for developing the economy of labour. As time goes on, the economy of man power, leaving out altogether the factor emphasized by Dr. Warren of what it costs—because it is still high whether a family farmer seeks a high standard of living or a wage-paid worker demands a high wage—the economy of man power will be more and more the dominating factor in economics. The adherence to the family farm unit does not provide scope for it. Professor Boss's paper itself makes it clear that it has mainly been possible in his country up to now because more land could be got as each stage of development demanded it. But we have to face the twin issues that the extra land will not always be easily available and that the world may not need the products of the extra land that is available. The family farm has only been able to change its complexion in the way that Professor Boss has shown because these issues did

not have to be faced for any length of time. Even then it is not certain that the American structure can provide for the high standard of living, the creation of leisure, the use of skill and special ability, which, in the economic world as a whole, have been made possible by the organization of labour.

J. F. DUNCAN, *Scottish Farm Servants' Union.*

I am very sorry that we did not have this paper read to us by Professor Boss before we had that rather heated discussion the other evening about the family farm, because, as Maxton has said, although we use what most people think is the same language, America gives us not merely a different accent sometimes to the words which we use in England but gives an entirely different meaning. When we speak about the family farm we think of the unit which supports the family and which the family works. Now, what I would like to know is to what extent the family farm in America is self-supporting so far as the provision of labour is concerned, or how far hired labour is used on the American family farm. Then I would like if our American friends would go further and give us some idea of what that labour means, not simply in terms of persons, but to give us some labour unit that we can use for comparative purposes. I agree with Maxton in that, if the American farm is to provide these other conveniences of civilization, then there must be some social control exercised over labour. You cannot leave the farmers, either in America or anywhere else, free to work even the members of the family themselves for unrestricted hours of labour in the attempt to obtain the same standard in competition with industry, and in competition with other people employed in other forms of agriculture.

We are quite definitely forced to that position in this country, and, in other countries in Europe where there is considerable employment of labour, the same demand is being made everywhere by the farm worker; that there shall be some restriction on the hours of work, that there shall be some definite provision of leisure for the farm worker, and that there shall be other social provisions as well. That is quite certain. These demands are being made, and it is certain that provisions of that kind will be made. The point I wish to put is: can we conceive of two different standards running side by side in the farming community; on the one hand a standard for hired labour embodying restriction of hours and other items of social provision; on the other hand, no such standards for small farmers and their families? Can we concede a certain standard of leisure for the hired

worker and deny it to another part of the community not very distinctly differentiated? There cannot be any great distinction between the working farmer that I saw in a considerable part of America and the hired man. Sooner or later every community is forced to take special steps to protect hired labour. Can you imagine a system going on where the other people are left without any protection except the protection against the money-lender? The protection being giving against the money-lender on the family farms is simply one means of social protection that the State is extending to the family farm on a parallel with the protection which the State is compelled to extend to the working class in other ways.

These are the difficulties I see for that kind of farming. Incidentally in his paper, Professor Boss points out that the development of large-scale farming in America was defeated, not by any fault in organization, not by anything that can be said to show that agriculture is more difficult to organize on these lines, but was defeated by the fact that the influx of immigrants provided the source of cheap labour which made it quite impossible for any larger scale of organization to be adopted. I suggest that however desirable it is to maintain the family homestead—and I think it is very much more a family homestead than a family farm, a living place for the family that the young people can go out from and come back to—it is not desirable that economic organization should be defeated by the exploitation of labour. It was a fact that the big-scale farms could not pay wages to enable them to compete with the unpaid labour of the family farmers. That was what it amounted to. It is the same thing that we are going through now. The family farm during the depression has continued, but at what cost? It has continued at the cost of the capital of the family and at the cost of the labour of the farmer which has gone unpaid. I suggest that if we are looking to development along the lines that civilization has been taking in the last generation, a development which takes into account not merely the cash return and not merely the question of getting a living, but the quality of living as well, then we cannot allow the exploitation of the family farmer and his family during times of depression and during times of falling values. That cannot be allowed to go on socially any more than we can allow the factory owner to use up children in the factory, or the owners of the steel plant to use up the men by working them excessive hours. We have to begin to apply social standards to the family farm and to the quality of life on the family farm in the same way as we are

doing it in the industrial areas and in those areas of Europe where agriculture is employing a considerable amount of labour.

While I have expressed disagreement on many points, I want to express my own thanks to Professor Boss for a most interesting description of the development of the system in America and for setting the problem in a form not merely, as Maxton says, more human than a good many of these papers that we have, but also in a form that is readily understandable to those of us who imagine we are speaking the same language until we discover our mistake.

C. IHRIG, *Budapest, Hungary.*

The paper of Professor Boss is really very closely connected with the subject which was dealt with on the fourth day of the Conference, that is, the question of the family farm and the large farm, which became, so to speak, the 'leitmotiv' of our generally very harmonious orchestra. I think Mr. Duncan who has just spoken also had recollections of his remarks on that subject. If I understood him correctly, he made the following statement: We cannot simply look on while there are two types of workers in agriculture, one which is socially protected against exploitation of his labour, and one of which the social body takes no account at all. The latter is the peasant and the working members of his family. This perception of Mr. Duncan's is completely out of line with the state of affairs of agriculture in central Europe and its farming population. Certainly there are years, districts, and farms when and where the agricultural labourer is better off than the free peasant owning his holding. But it is a curious fact that even under these conditions there is a continual demand for further distribution of land, even on the part of the workers who witness the state of the peasant and his family. These workers envy the poor exploited peasant and his wife and children.

I think we in central Europe are competent to speak on this question, for we have, particularly in Hungary, large farms as well as small, and therefore very pressing problems of hired labour. If there is an agricultural proletariat anywhere, it is certainly in Hungary. That is not a pleasant state of affairs, but at least it gives us the opportunity of studying rural socialism. This Hungarian rural proletariat seeks power, but in the forty or fifty years of its existence no programme could ever take root among the proletariat, if it did not provide for the distribution of the land in small independent peasant holdings. Every socialist agrarian programme comprising operation of the land under collective, co-operative, or State ownership has been

rejected. I will not investigate whether it really holds good, as Mr. Duncan has claimed, that the standard of life of the worker is higher, or whether the social protection of most advanced countries affords him independence and security to a greater degree than the family holding where all efforts are made in the individual interests of the operator and his family. I would only point out that in the mind of the labourer the peasant conditions of life are not conceived to be undesirable—on the contrary. For reasons of efficient production, it may seem desirable to abolish independent peasantry, but for social reasons it is undesirable, because it would create social conditions of dissatisfaction. Even if the peasant often works harder and longer than the labourer, he is willing to do so to preserve his independence. Easy migration from the land, as found in America, is not to be found in central Europe. The peasant clings to his land, even if the returns are not equal to half what his wage-earnings in the cities might be. Experiences, therefore, in America or England cannot be generalized. And if in some countries the family holding is only an economic and not a sociological unit, this does not apply to other countries. It is very important that it has been the centre of so many of our discussions, for one of the problems, most difficult to understand, is why the small peasant farmer in central Europe should prefer to stay on his holding rather than earn higher wages as a labourer.

ANDREW BOSS, *University of Minnesota, U.S.A.*

May I have just a few minutes to explain some of the things that were not noted in my paper? I perhaps made a mistake in assuming that all people understood the conditions surrounding the American family farm. As I indicated in the opening of my paper, people came to America to establish independent homes for themselves where they might live their own lives. We pride ourselves on being a democratic nation, not politically only but socially, and the farmer on the farm regards himself as very little different from the man that he employs to work for him. On this group of farms from which I quoted figures, I presume without turning to the data on the case that about 10 per cent. of the total labour on those farms is performed by hired labourers. The farmer and his wife with their family do the greater part of the farm labour, hiring only during the critical periods of the year such as harvest time or possibly in putting in the crop. When they do hire a man he is on the same social level as themselves. Whether he be a son of a neighbouring farmer, as frequently happens, or whether he belongs to the village or comes from a large city, or whether he be as we call it a hobo labourer, he is taken

into the family as a member of the family, he is fed at the farmer's table and sleeps under the same roof. There is no distinction, therefore, between the labourer and the farmer. That is the case of the group of family farms such as I have described.

I tried to indicate to you that there is no such thing as *the* family farm. Each one is different. We have a great many family farms on which labour is hired all the year round. In those instances, they are in many cases better farmers and are doing just what is being done here in England, providing their workers with a cottage and giving milk and meat and a garden in addition to the wage, but the worker is established on the same social level as the farmer himself. We do not have any distinction of worker and gentleman farmer; in fact we have no gentlemen farmers in America. We do have a great many business men who have farms that correspond to your gentlemen's estates here. We do not call them estates; we call them 'folly farms', a unit on which to spend money, made elsewhere, for the benefit of workers and the farm families. That condition among our family farms is hard for many Europeans and people in Great Britain to understand and appreciate. One has to live among these farmers really to understand the situation.

As to Mr. Duncan's point that the farm labourer and the farmer himself is being exploited, I agree that the labour of the farmer and of the farm labourer has been exploited in many cases. They have not been fully rewarded for the labour performed. There is not a sufficient number of farm workers in America to justify workers' unions, and we have no workers' unions among the farm workers of America. We do have them in all the trades and industries, where the 10-hour day was first advocated, then the 8-hour day, and now the 6-hour day is wanted. Whether they will get it or not remains to be seen. The farm labourer has no need for such a thing because he himself works in the field with the farmer, and the labourer's hours are usually the same as the farmer's hours. On well-organized farms where a number of labourers are hired, a 10-hour day at least is recognized. On our Government and institutional farms, the 8-hour day is recognized just as in the trade unions, and in my judgement the time is not far distant when the 8-hour day will be the established thing for the farmers, and I am inclined to think the farmer can organize his work so that he can do as much in 8 hours as he now does in 10 or 12 or 16. Our farmers make great claims for working 16 hours a day. That is their day, they say, leaving 8 hours for sleep. I have frequently pointed out to groups of farmers to whom I talk that there is quite a difference between being awake 16 hours

and working 16 hours, and that if they apply themselves they might do their work in 8 hours and then sit on the fence and watch the animals grow the other 8 hours, and they would accomplish the same.

Those points about our family farms are the things that we have become so accustomed to that we hardly feel it necessary to explain. We know so well what they are and what the conditions are that we are not much concerned about them. The family farm, or the land shall I say, in America is the shock absorber for the left-overs from all the trades and industries. When a man is out of a job he goes out on to a piece of land, establishes his garden, and grows his own food, or he establishes a little larger farm as a subsistence farm, or a still larger farm which he operates and usually turns into a successful farm. Most of our farmers have grown from farmer's sons, to hired men, to tenants, to farm owners. If they did not like the farm, they have gone into some other sort of business. It is more easily possible for our American rural workers to determine for themselves what they are going to do, what they want to be, than I think it is here. That is the great advantage of the working class, and it is one of the explanations for our farmers being willing to work so long for so small a return. They still have in mind that family farm, that place of refuge, that place of social security, to which they can return if they wish to do so.

We have had that phase of the question brought back to us lately in this period of depression. In most of our States there has been an increase of all the way from 2,000 to 5,000 farms per State, according to the last census. These farms are small tracts on which families have settled down, and built small houses, having returned to the land for subsistence. They are counted as farmers, though they will disappear again when good times return. I think sometimes that if the economists and the uplifters and the reformers would leave the farmers in peace for a while and allow economic forces to work, without artificial interference, exchange values would sooner find their equilibrium and prices return to a more normal level.