

newal of the artesian waters at their source has not been up to normal because of inadequate rainfall. Whether or not this increased saltiness is permanent or temporary remains to be proven by future analyses. It may be that in years of adequate rainfall these wells will freshen some, but that the general trend of saltiness will be upward. This seems to be a logical assumption in view of the rather definite information we have from a few analyses and growers' observations by taste that the wells in the Cocoa-Merritt Island area have increased appreciably in salt in the past 20 years. For this reason and also because we may be getting chronic salt damage in some groves, it would be advisable to exercise caution in the use of all artesian wells. Chronic salt damage might occur even with water of relatively low salt concentration, as in California, and yet not manifest itself so severely as in California because of the difference in climatic conditions. It would seem advisable not to use the wells more than was commensurate with adequate irrigation and spraying. Once the fresh water is removed from the artesian slope by excessive use of the wells tapping that slope, it will likely be replaced by salt water. If this occurs there is a question as to whether

or not it could ever be freshened sufficiently for agricultural purposes, even by shutting off completely all the wells tapping it for a number of years.

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TWELVE MILLION FARMERS WITHOUT SOCIAL SECURITY PROTECTION

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Twelve million farmers are without protection against insecurity caused by illness, accident, disability and old age. The age-old request for protection against some of life's common hazards became a living reality for many with the passage of the Social Security Act in 1935, but not for

farm hands and operators.

Failure to include farm owners and agricultural labor under old-age and survivors insurance imposes a severe handicap on agricultural regions as compared with industrial regions—a handicap similar to that caused by tariffs and inequitable freight

rates. The farmer pays a proportionate part of the cost of the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance system but does not receive its benefits—a species of taxation without representation. The system is financed by a payroll tax on covered occupations, paid by employers and employees, one percent on each at present and graduated to three percent in 1949. This payroll tax is passed on to the farmers through the price charged for agricultural implements, goods and commodities, as well as for services sold. Employers pass it on through higher wage rates in manufacturing states and the payroll tax is thus spread out through the whole economy. This inequality is demonstrated by the fact that in 1942, 11 states which included 55 percent of the country's population reported 70 percent of the taxable wages for Old-Age and Survivors Insurance. The other 37 states, with 45 percent of the population, accounted for only 30 percent of the taxable wages reported. This is largely true because of the non-coverage of some five million farm operators and four million farm workers, domestic servants, and workers in small, self-operated businesses.

The farmer also pays a part of the cost of old-age and survivors insurance by paying the tax while working in covered employment but in most cases loses all right to benefits when returning to agriculture, his normal employment. Wage records of the Bureau of Old-Age and Survivors Insurance reveal that about fifteen million persons who had some wage credits had not accumulated the necessary amount to be entitled to the insurance because of the short duration of employment. A high percentage of those who do not qualify for benefits are from agriculture. It is estimated that a potential benefit right to approximately \$65,000,000 annually would be built up for our six states in the Southeast if the present excluded groups, composed mainly of farm operators and workers,

were brought within the present Old-Age and Survivors Insurance program. From May 1943 through February 29, 1944, 26,622 claimants made inquiry at our field offices in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee and South Carolina. 7,225, or more than 25 percent, received no benefits because they had not worked long enough to be insured.

The 1940 population of the continental United States was 131,699,255. Our six southeastern States of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Tennessee had a population of 14,853,559—or 11.3 percent of the nation's total. The total number of covered workers for the nation under Old-Age and Survivors Insurance was 42,000,000—or 8 percent of the nation's total. The total amount of Old-Age and Survivors Insurance benefits paid in 1942 in this region was \$768,600—or 6 percent of the nation's total of \$12,575,000.

There are more aged people and more children in the South than elsewhere in the nation, and social insurance needs of the area are greater in proportion to the population, rather than less. Exclusion of farm workers from Old-Age and Survivors Insurance compels a greater dependency of agricultural areas upon public aid programs and at the same time increases the general tax burden, local, state, and federal. One of the primary purposes of Old-Age and Survivors Insurance is to relieve this situation by enabling all workers to pay the comparatively small premium over the years and attain an insurance status. Unless this is done, our people in agricultural regions will be compelled to fall back on the public assistance programs—old-age assistance, aid to dependent children, and aid to the needy blind.

The Public Assistance programs are causing a high levy upon the tax resources of our states, even in a period when employment is at the highest level in our history. In a recent month, the six states of this region had 223,469 persons on the Old-

Age Assistance rolls, drawing approximately \$1,506,335 a month. Florida is now spending approximately \$4,500,000 annually on

its Public Assistance Program which includes Old-Age Assistance, Aid to Dependent Children, and Aid to the Needy Blind.

THE FARMER GOES TO TOWN

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Yes, the farmer goes to town. He has to—that's where the ration board meets. And he takes his wife with him; he wants to, fortunately. They planned to leave home right after breakfast, but didn't get away 'til nearly eight o'clock—she had to wash the dishes. Katie didn't show up last Sunday. She sent word Wednesday that she had to go see her Auntie and should she come back next Monday? (Let's hope Katie is sober by Monday.)

He already has his coat on, and it must be going to rain, it's so hot and sticky. He has been ready for a long time now, and has said so more than once, but she can't find a pair of stockings that match without a run. "Where is that kodak picture of Junior in his uniform, to put in my letter to your mother?" The farmer loves his mother but usually leaves it up to his wife to write to her.

He is still ready to go and she is ready too, now, so "Fred, why didn't you put these windows down while you were waiting?"

Well, as we said before, The Farmer Goes to Town. They drive out past the wood pile and are on their way.

"Turn on the radio, Fred."

RADIO: "To grant farmers the price increases demanded by certain selfish farm groups would cause a disastrous spiral of inflation. To meet their demands would mean increased food prices which, in turn, would justify the inevitable demands of Labor that the Little Steel Formula be

abandoned. We must and shall hold the line. The avarice of the greedy shall not oppress the needy. Farmers must not be allowed—" CLICK. That click is where the farmer turned off the radio.

They left the car behind Sears Roebuck's and planned to meet back there at four o'clock. The farmer thinks over what he has to do. (Have to get home by milking time. That sorry boy, Jean, hasn't showed up all this week. Mr. Cobb says Jean is making 80c an hour picking up palmetto chunks at the new airport. Of course he can't afford to milk cows.)

"Well, remember, four o'clock sharp." (Let's see now, I've got to see about a tractor hitch, and arrange for some soda, and see the County Agent about some dolomite, get those plow points and go by the ration board. A piece of beefsteak would go good tonight. Wish I had a cut off that steer I sold Jim. Twelve cents a pound is pretty good for a grass-fat steer. Maybe I did cause a little inflation on that deal. Here's Jim's butcher shop now.)

"Mornin', Jim. How about a steak off of that steer I sold you?"

"Sure, Fred, a nice porterhouse cut. That will be seventy cents a pound."

(Lord have mercy—I sold it to him for 12c on the hoof. Quite a spread between 12c and 70c.)

Coming out of the butcher shop he met a candidate whose face seemed familiar.

"Hello, Fred, old boy. Put 'er there, Pal. How are things looking out your way for