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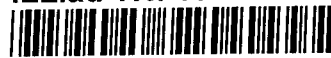
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# No More Frontiers

Part Two

By REXFORD G. TUGWELL

*Under Secretary of Agriculture*



Farm and forest: The ideal combination as found in Jackson County, North Carolina

**Spoliation of the land and economic necessity have already forced relocation on thousands of Americans; the Administration is trying to control the movement in the best interests of the country**

**T**HE program of the Resettlement Administration is not based on any sentimental "back to the land" notion. Unless there is a solid economic core in what we do to resettle our underprivileged farm and city population, it will be merely an empty and expensive gesture. There is, of course, an urgent economic necessity for moving people off bad, eroded or otherwise unsuitable land. Farms whose fertility has been exhausted cannot support human life, and as their fertility declines the living standards possible to those people who stubbornly endeavor to wrestle for a livelihood with dead acres decline to disastrously low levels in times of national "prosperity", while in times like these such people swell the relief rolls. Moreover, the physical necessity for protecting the still fertile farm lands from the forces of erosion imposes an additional eco-

nomic mandate to retire these lands from unsuitable and uneconomic production.

We should understand this: The first aspect of the resettlement program—the retirement of substandard lands from cultivation and the removal of the people from those lands to more suitable farms—is not so much a governmental policy as it is a natural phenomenon. These lands *are* going out of cultivation anyhow and have been doing so steadily for many years. The people living on those lands *are* leaving them and have been leaving them for years before the depression. Thus twenty-seven of the twenty-nine poorest counties in the United States, which now have an average of over 36 per cent of the population on relief, and seventy of the eighty "worst" counties, having over 30 per cent on relief, were the areas which people were leaving during the prosperous 1920's. What the government proposes to do in this regard is to give a little foresighted direction and stimulation to an entirely natural economic process. We do not propose to drive people off the land—they are being driven off the land by the consequences of disorganized and improvident agricultural practices.

These economic refugees have created the purely political problem of relief. For many years, while their total numbers were relatively small and the apparent opportunities open to private initiative were still relatively numerous, the government assumed no responsibility

for them. Certain communities and counties maintained workhouses, poorhouses, poor farms and the like to take care of those members of society who were unable to make a living, but on the whole the nation awaited the advent of the present Administration before we assumed the political responsibility for taking care of the unemployed city workers and the underprivileged farmers who depended on high prices and foreign trade demands to enable them to make a living on their substandard acres. Here again, it should be pointed out that the political decision to see that no American should starve was also inescapable. If we had decided to "let 'em eat cake" we would have faced—even granting our brute ability to maintain "law and order" by efficient police methods—a general political and social disintegration of our institutions of a most serious nature. A democracy can afford to ask greater sacrifices of its members in time of national emergency than can other forms of government, but in return the members of a democracy demand and are entitled to receive the support of the government of the whole people in time of distress which bears no relation to individual capabilities. Any other attitude would be a blind fatalism which is alien to the American spirit. It is, at any rate, a fact that we have, as a nation, decided to accord economic relief to the victims of this economic crisis. With that aspect of relief, however, the Resettlement Ad-





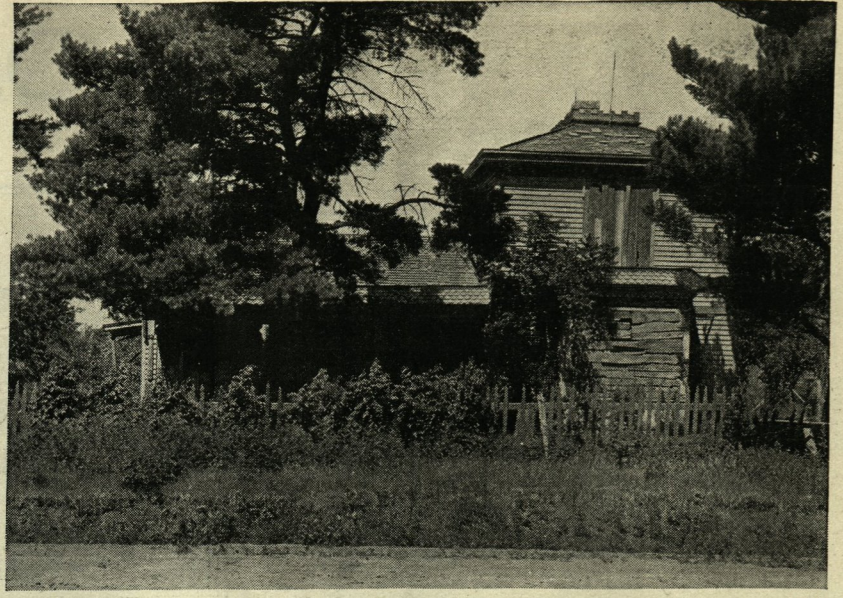
1890

ministration is not directly concerned. That is the responsibility of other agencies of government, including local and state units.

Our ultimate problem is the social problem of taking these millions of economic refugees from our "rural slums" and eroded substandard acres and removing them from relief, permanently, by relocating them, in relation to economic land and other resources, under terms which will not only enable them to support themselves without further help from the community but which will prevent them from repeating the same disastrous mistakes which brought about their present plight. There is too easy an assumption that an underprivileged person is "worthless", "no good", "shiftless", when frequently it is entirely a matter of economic opportunity and social environment. Some of the best stock in America is involved in this agricultural crisis which the Resettlement Administration is endeavoring to solve. We feel that we can take the fundamental soundness of our rural population for granted and that, if we concentrate on providing them with the essential elements of real economic opportunity, they can take care of themselves, without paternalism, regimentation or any of the intrusive interferences with individual habits and institutions which have done so much to discredit the principles of social justice among large sections of our population.

Our entire program, therefore, so far as it relates to people, contemplates facilitating their orderly withdrawal before natural economic forces, without charity or resort to the police power, and the short-circuiting of the political necessity for relief by relocating them with reference to better economic opportunities on terms which will be socially and economically advantageous to them individually and to the community as a whole. We have such confidence in the fundamental worth of the American people that we pay no heed to charges of "shiftlessness", "worthlessness", "laziness", and are not distracted by the slick epithets of yokel, rube or hill-billy.

When a man will trudge four miles through the Arkansas mud to attend an FERA adult education class, and when Kentucky mountaineers clear trails in order that the mountain people may troop in to listen to isolated radio receiving sets, there is no reason to lose faith in the will to achieve of our disadvantaged five million citizens in the rural areas. And if the Resettlement Administration can quietly pursue its program for their rehabilitation through the years, without benefit of ballyhoo or bombast, I am confident that we can effect the most orderly and constructive "strategic retreat" from an economic disaster recorded in history. It is not a problem which can be solved quickly



1933

**Teale farmhouse in Missouri (above):** In 1890 it was considered one of the community's finest; by 1933 it was abandoned and the land severely eroded as a result of wartime exploitation

**Home of a "scratch farmer" in Georgia (below):** Neglect of forests has forced people in large areas of the Southern highlands to a bare subsistence



or easily. The situation of rural distress is a natural result of long-time practices and trends of decades past. We cannot, obviously, overnight undo, readjust or redirect the trends which have been over a century in the making.

Since the Civil War a definite maldistribution of wealth in great areas of our country has increased the ever-growing problem of remedying the plight of the underprivileged in rural America. In the cotton fields of the South and in the West and other areas of our country where the land's fertility is being slowly strangled has the problem become most acute. Even in boom times tens of thousands of our people lived on the marginal fringe in a virtual economic hand-to-mouth existence.

Natural concomitants of marginal living—malnutrition and inadequate opportunities for self-improvement—are having far-reaching effect on the lives of our rural population in every section of the country where the economic pinch is most acute. In addition to ills of the body caused by improper and inadequate diet and scanty food supply, thousands of our people have also suffered from what may be called malnutrition of the spirit. Deprived of the results of the technological advance achieved by their urban brethren, they have been subjected to widespread sectional and group prejudices, strong emotional complexes and moral jealousies. Treatment must be given for these ills as for other types of deprivation caused by shifts in our economic life.

While the nation as a whole went forward conquering new frontiers of intellectual prog-

ress, developing new techniques in industrial production and scientific management, conditions of life in rural America suffered through curtailed opportunities and in many cases registered a serious and progressive decline. While inventive genius narrowed the boundaries of the physical and scientific world, our rural folk for the most part lived in an era long since obsolete, with the only modern indicia too frequently a rattletrap motor car or a mail-order phonograph.

A more serious attack on the roots of our rural civilization was the fact that the same technical progress and scientific management which have opened new vistas for an abundant life in our own time have, through lack of controls and direction, in effect pushed our marginal citizens further down toward the bottom of the economic scale. It is the resultant imperative demand for economic controls and social correctives with which we are faced and which we are trying to answer in an administrative and technical capacity through the establishment and operation of the Resettlement Administration.

Thousands of hill and country folk who had left their little farms have been forced away from the cities and back to their already depleted land, there to attempt to wrest a frugal living from a soil which had given its prime fertility to generations long dead. A decreasing birth rate, restricted immigration as well as technological advance, have had their part in a failure to develop in mathematical progression the markets which farm and country had been led to anticipate. Intensive development of mining, lumbering and oil areas at times when demand was strong and prices high have rendered hundreds of thousands of acres dead, leaving on these sterile areas stranded populations who no longer can be considered paying consumers ready to take their share of the output of farm and factory as part of the main current of the national economy.

This inexorable process has affected our entire national life to a degree hitherto unrealized and unevaluated. From the highest stratum of society to the lowest marginal group, the effect of the machine has been marked. But just as progress in the laboratories and the city factories displaced factory hands and consumers so has technical advance in farm machinery resulted in a surplus of farm man power.

The lack of directing forces and controls, the utterly incoherent and undisciplined development for many generations, have brought us face to face with the land problem insistently demanding attention and solution.

These demands have been dramatically

(Continued on Page 22)



# From Day to Day

**T**HE Grass Rooters have so dazzled the public by praising Jefferson and cheering Smith, and demanding all in one breath individualism and old age pensions, free enterprise and labor laws, that it is easy to forget the total silence of this mass movement (the marchers in which were appointed by local Republican Committees) on the subject of candidates. The Grass Rooters were wise not to have any candidates there, and even wiser not to talk about them. There is only one real Republican candidate. The less said about him now by his admirers, the better for his candidacy. The Republican psychologists know this, because they know that if you are planning to give a child a dose of castor oil, it is poor policy to tell him about it a whole year beforehand.

The Republican plan is simple, and clear: Keep the loyal rooters' and Grass Rooters' mouths open with hunger for that tasty old Constitution pie their grandfathers used to make, and then, in July, 1936, slip down a great big spoonful of castor oil.

Which is another way of saying that the strategy of the next Republican Convention will be to run Herbert Hoover as a Dark Horse.

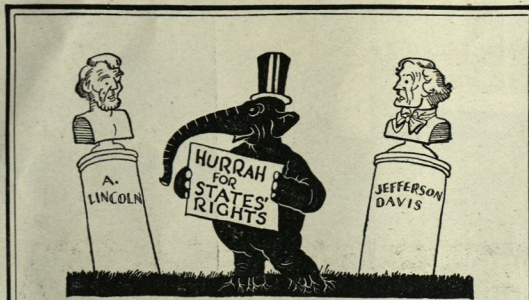
**T**HE Grass Rooters did not condemn the AAA, which is the same as saying they are all for it. This is so enormous a joke that one cannot even laugh. Perhaps we should congratulate the farmers on the way in which they outlicked the city slickers by getting this egg into the Republican nest so early in the game. The AAA is too ticklish a subject, and too large an egg, for any of the Old Guard to dare try to roll it out of the nest. And did not the Republican platform of 1932 promise to support "any plan which will help to balance production against demand, and thereby raise agricultural prices, provided it is economically sound and administratively workable without burdensome bureaucracy"?

As the campaign warms up, this egg is going to hatch.

**T**HE Wagner Bill has been reconditioned and streamlined by legal engineers so as to withstand another such tornado as the Schechter Case. Its passage seems fairly certain. We still object on principle to collective bargaining by a simple majority, and believe in the more democratic principle of proportional representation.

**T**UCKED away in the report of the House Committee on the Wagner Bill is an argument, by Congressman Vito Marcantonio, for the separation of the proposed Labor Board from the Department of Labor. Its logic is unanswerable. It is, besides, one of the best state papers produced in this Congress.

**I**F, as seems probable some time this Summer, a Circuit Court hands down a decision which foreshadows a constitu-



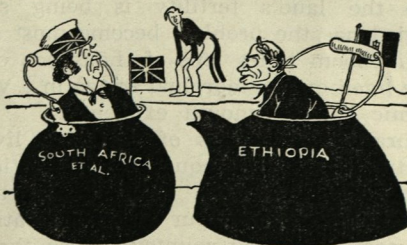
## Lost in a Fog

**B**Y a curious turn of events, the Democrats find themselves defending a strong Federal government. On the other hand, the Republicans meet at the tomb of Lincoln (of all places!) and whoop it up for states' rights. Bewildered members of both parties are wondering how they got that way.

The Grass Rooters accuse the President of failing to keep his promise to balance the budget. He might have had better luck if the unemployed had not acted so stubborn. They clung to the old American custom of eating food and wearing clothes.

Governor Talmadge, an outspoken critic of the New Deal, has got himself elected Democratic National Committeeman from Georgia. This, the *New York Herald Tribune* says, puts him into a position to get into Jim Farley's hair. If you are familiar with our Postmaster General's topography, you will call that a pretty exposed position.

Mussolini says that England has no right to criticize his doings in Ethiopia. He seems to remember that the British were not always so particular about the acquisition of African real estate. If Americans complain, the Duce will probably rake up that old scandal about the Indians.



tional threat to the AAA's processing tax, there will be a strong demand that the Supreme Court cut short its vacation, reconvene in Washington before the end of August, and review this and other New Deal legislation as quickly as possible. It is perfectly true that the Supreme Court is free to ignore such a demand, but the consequences of undoing still more of the New Deal program are so serious—as are

also the consequences of prolonging the uncertainty—that the Court would be doing a patriotic service to heed it.

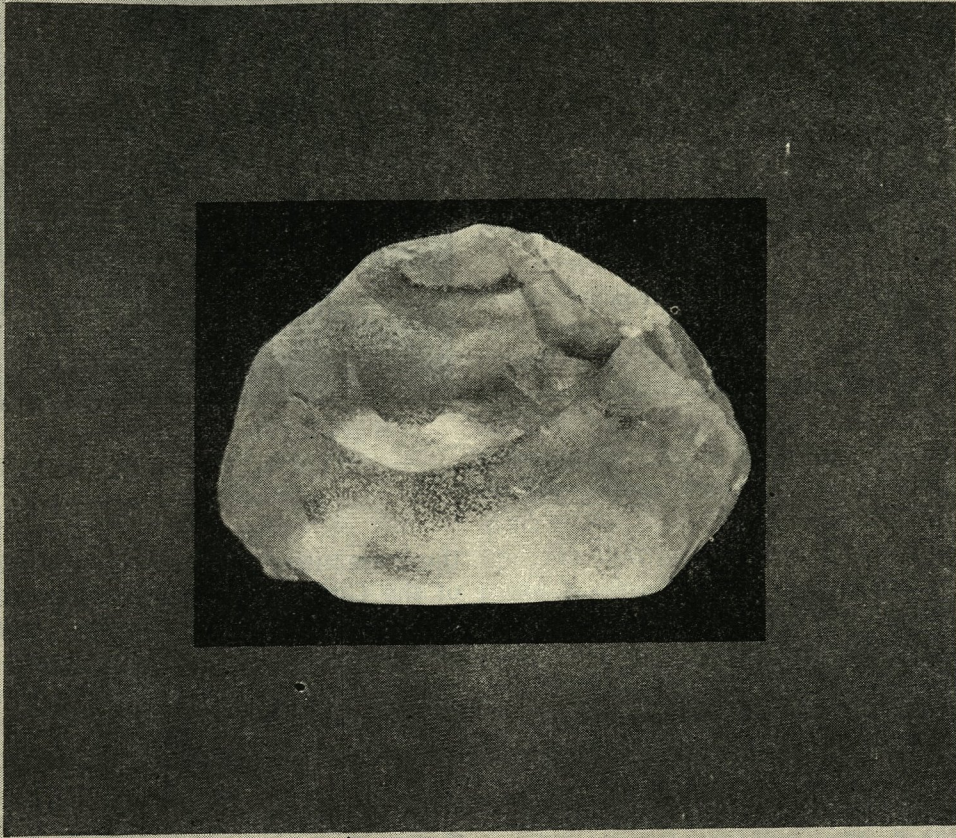
**C**RITICS of the New Deal have pointed out that in its early months new millionaires (or former ones who regained that blessed state) sprouted faster than Forgotten Men were reemployed. And while the millions still on the dole dictate a shift in the policy of work relief, there are signs that things are a good deal brighter in the higher income brackets. Wine dealers report bigger sales of vintages and champagne than in any previous June, entertainment bureaus are flooded with debutante parties and elaborate Long Island weddings, steamship companies are surprised and pleased at bookings 10 to 30 per cent better than last year, and *Variety*, financial thermometer of show business, tells us that jazz bands, which have for years been accustomed to hard campus bargains, are getting whatever prices they ask for playing at the proms of depression undergraduates.

**B**ASEBALL has often been a cause of blindness in umpires, but it is very seldom a cure for blindness about things that have nothing to do with baseball. A man called Alabama Pitts was honorably discharged from Sing Sing, where he made a name for himself on the prison nine. He was touted, he received professional offers, but the head of the minor league organization indignantly announced that no ex-convict would ever play ball on any team of his. The public was even more indignant in saying that this was unfair, and Judge Landis decided Pitts could play.

If Mr. Pitts' talents had been those of most ex-convicts, and if he had tried, as so many ex-convicts try, to find a decent job as dishwasher or lathe tender, no one would have made a fuss. It is obvious that if we don't go out of our way to try to find jobs for all ex-convicts, most of them will be forced back into crime, and from there back into jail. Where they will say, bitterly, what is in practice only too true, that the most effective job done by our penal system (which should function just as much outside of jails as in them) is to make pretty darned good criminals out of what was, on the whole, not always very promising material.

**W**E congratulate the *New York Times* upon the medal Mussolini has pinned in its lapel by forbidding it to pass the frontiers of Italy. It is a rare decoration, like the Victoria Cross, for there are not many newspapers with the courage to say exactly what they think about Public Dictator Number 3 (Stalin and Hitler being numbers 1 and 2). This honor reminds one of that achieved by those individuals who, because they spoke what seemed to them the truth about our social system, find themselves gloriously listed in the *Red Network*.





GEORGE HIGGINS FOR TODAY

## THE JONKER—ONE-QUARTER POUND OF DIAMOND

A great piece of crystallized carbon has come out of South Africa to America. It arrived in New York about two weeks ago. Its present home, when it is not on view, is a vault in Rockefeller Center. There it sits while its owner, Harry Winston, a diamond merchant, makes up his mind what to do with it. He believes that his great gem is perfect enough to be cut into one stone of about 540 carats, which would make it the largest cut diamond in the world. In the rough the Jonker weighs 726 carats, feels like soap and looks like a piece of ice. It is shown actual size in the illustration. Jacobus Jonker, a sixty-two-year-old farmer and prospector, unearthed it on January 16, 1934, at Elandsfontein, Pretoria. It is not the largest diamond ever found. That honor goes to the famous Culli-

nan, discovered in 1905 at the mine of Sir Thomas Cullinan, also in Pretoria. The Cullinan weighed 3,025 carats (about one and a third pounds) in the rough. The Transvaal government bought it from Sir Thomas as a birthday gift for King Edward VII of Britain. It was cut into nine large and ninety-six small stones, the biggest of which—Cullinan I, the Star of Africa—weighs 530 carats, making it the largest polished diamond in existence. It is in the Royal Scepter of King George V. Cullinan II, 309 carats, is in the Imperial State Crown. At first it was thought that the Jonker diamond might be a part of the Cullinan, but gem experts agree that the Jonker is superior to the Cullinan in color and texture. The Jonker is insured against all risks for \$1,000,000 and guarded more closely than an Indian potentate.