

CROP ACREAGE WILL BE REDUCED IN NORTHWEST NEXT YEAR, REPORT

(By Associated Press)
BISMARCK, N. D., Dec. 17.—Crop acreage will be greatly reduced in the northwest this year, in the opinion of agricultural officials of North Dakota. They differ, however, as to the amount of probable decrease in next year's harvest, and in the degree of importance to be attached to the several probable causes.

Commissioner of Agriculture and Labor John N. Hagan, estimates that the decrease in acreage in North Dakota, will range from 25 to 35 per cent. County Agent George W. Gustafson, who is in daily contact with farmers of Burleigh county, believes the decrease will range around 25 per cent.

"Labor is only one factor in the situation," said Commissioner Hagan. "The most important factor is that the prices for farm commodities this year are so far below the cost of production that the farmer will plant less than the normal acreage next year."

Farmers Shun Debt.
"The price of labor, of course, includes the cost of boarding farm workers and has a bearing on the cost of thrashing, but other costs of farm operations are more important than the cost of labor. I anticipate that the minimum wage of labor this year will be the maximum wage next year."

"All the factors combined in the cost of production are such that the farmer will not make the investment necessary to handle a larger acreage because he will have to go into debt, as the receipts of this year will not carry the expenditures over next year."

Wages paid farm workers this year ranged from \$60 to \$100 a month, with the average about \$70, Mr. Hagan said.

Dr. J. H. Worst, commissioner of immigration, declares that North Dakota could immediately absorb 10,000 new settlers.

Cut Down Labor.
"In my opinion," he said, "farmers as a rule will employ the least possible amount of labor next spring, but will put in about as many acres as they can with their own help. What the difference in the number of acres seeded will be, is difficult to guess. On the other hand the acreage seeded will doubtless be put in better condition than where farmers make an effort to seed the largest possible acreage, for the number of acres seeded, therefore, there should be a better yield per acre than the average, where labor is employed and much haphazard farming is done. Another factor must be taken into consideration. Except within restricted dry areas, a large amount of fall plowing has been done. This land should be in good condition and can be seeded early, and if the season is at all favorable should make a good yield."

"The prospect for a very large immigration is very good this year owing to the high rentals asked for farms in adjoining states where land has been boosted to an average of \$200 to \$500 an acre, and the comparatively cheap farms that can be had in North Dakota. There is room in this state for 10,000 new settlers."

County Agent Gustafson declared the shortage of labor this year was not as keen as some people had been led to believe, although the fact that there was a shortage was reflected in wages of \$6 to \$7 a day during the harvest season.

"There is every indication that the labor shortage will disappear by next summer," he said, "and the chief factor in the reduced acreage will be the slump in agricultural prices this year."

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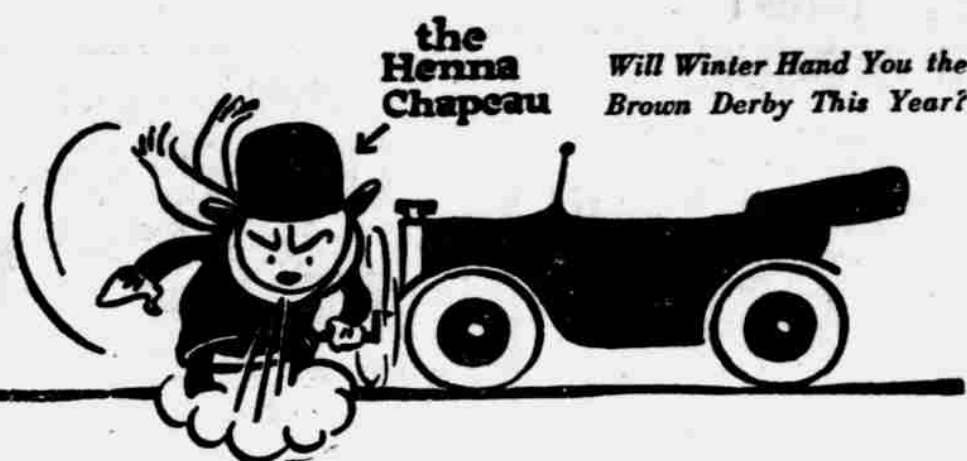
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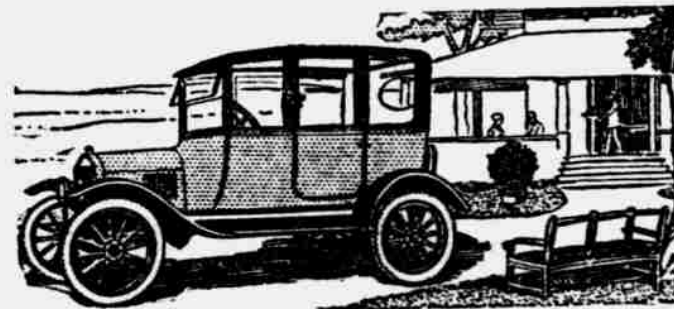
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