

## TRANSFER OF AMERICAN FARM TITLES

ONE AND a quarter million farms in the United States have, according to statistics gathered by the Department of Agriculture, changed hands during 1922. As statistics of this kind have never been gathered before it is impossible to judge whether this figure represents an increase or a decrease compared with previous years, but it is thought that 1922 represents the high peak in transfer of titles in farms and farmland in this country.

In nine of the down south states every fourth farm changed owner. In six of the New England states every tenth farm fell into new possession. Approximately four hundred thousand farms changed ownership during the year which represents change of title of every sixteenth farm in the entire country.

More than one and a third million farms in America are operated under some sort of a lease or rent arrangement. Six hundred and twenty-five thousand of these farms changed lessees.

These changes in farm leases vary greatly in different states. The State of Maine is lowest with three per cent, while the State of Oklahoma, with thirty-eight per cent, presents the largest figure in farm lease changes for the last year, of all the states in the Union. Whether the acute political situation involving racial and religious issues, which developed in Oklahoma last year, has had anything to do with the fact that so many people able to "clear out" of Oklahoma gave up their leases, is a matter not shown in the department's statistics. Those who are familiar with the situation at close range, claim that the real cause for many Oklahomans "pulling stakes" can not be laid to ordinary circumstances but to the unpleasant conditions recently created in that state through the development of racial and religious enmity among the people.

The growing tendency among owners of farms to lease their land to tenants instead of living on the land themselves and operating their farms for their own benefit and pleasure, is another startling information revealed through these statistics. The number of rented farms in America increased twenty-seven thousand in round figures during the year 1922. Consequently twenty-seven thousand families, owners of farms, gave up farming, left the land and for the most part moved into the cities, leaving their farms in the hands of tenants.

Tenants on farmland are evidently to a great extent not of the sticking quality as another item of figures reveal. No less than two hundred and thirty thousand of this class of farmers gave up farming during the year and sought other occupation for various reasons.

While we are spending our time, and money making the cities attractive we should begin to give some thought to making the country proportionately attractive so that farmlife and work on the farm could be made more pleasant, in true appreciation of the fact that a well developed countryside is not alone the most effective background, but the very backbone to a

city. Minus this background the picture of a beautiful city becomes too transparent and indefinite to make a strong impression and a populous city with a depopulated or sparsely settled country around it is not going to attract many of the thrifty, industrious, conservative kind of people.

The people of the cities should learn to value properly the people of the countryside and farm and place them on an equal footing, regard them in exactly the same light as they want the country folks to regard the people of the cities. The white collar contingent must learn to regard the overall brigade less disdainfully and more admiringly and value the fact that figuratively speaking there are one hundred actual producers among the latter, as against ninety-nine non-producing consumers among the former. It should be borne in mind that while the non-producing consumer constitutes an asset to the producer, the producer is as essential to the consuming elements of the cities as the very air they breathe.

Too many farmers have quit the country and the farms, taken up their residence in the cities and joined the merry non-producing throng in order to gain the "higher" social rating that even an ex-farmer with some means can obtain for himself and his family as a city dweller.

Let it not be said of Americans that they are "too educated" and too good, themselves, to cultivate the wonderful soil of America, blest with tremendous fertility. We should always be able to refute the argument that immigration is necessary to obtain the labor essential to cultivate our land. Many agricultural and horticultural people now contend this to be true with the same positiveness with which our industrial captains charge that the restrictive immigration laws are keeping out the labor necessary to keep American industries going. Let us prove that it is an illusion that the Americans will not work at common labor on our farms and in our industries and that the work that must be done in these pursuits therefore depends upon immigrant labor.

The Americanization needs were here yesterday, they are here today and will be here tomorrow in a lesser or greater degree in proportion to the interest the American people are taking in the Americanization movement. This magazine is possibly today the only publication in America primarily devoted to this cause. If the needs of Americanization were not so obvious, the enemies of the movement would not be so numerous, taking especial pains in discrediting those who engage in Americanization work. The two extreme oppositions to the Americanization movement are the group "doctored" foreign born and the group "doctored" native born who are engaged in a "warfare" against one another, but make a common cause in their warfare against Americanization. Are you for or against the Americanization movement? If you are against it, you are not an American whether you claim citizenship by birth or adoption. If you are for it, to what extent do you contribute to make the people of America a rational, tolerant and united whole?

It is a great day in the life of any woman when she convinces her husband that the size of his income is estimated by the way his wife dresses.