

MUCH LAND READY FOR "DRY FARMS"

Thousands of Acres Which May Be Taken Up, 320 Acres at a Clip.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 11.—There are seven states and two territories where the settler is permitted to enter upon 320 acres of land belonging to Uncle Sam, instead of the 160-acre homestead tract which is the limit everywhere else. But it is only a certain sort of land that our beneficent government will let loose into private hands in this large a chunk.

Congress on February 19 of this year passed what is called the "enlarged homestead act." It was to permit the settler to take a sufficient acreage of non-mineral, non-timbered and nonirrigable land, so that while he might "dry farm" part of it, the remainder might be allowed to lie fallow each season, that congress enacted this measure. The provisions of the law apply only to certain lands in Colorado, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming, and the territories of Arizona and New Mexico. Up to the present time there have been designated by the secretary of the interior as prima facie subject to entry under this act, in round numbers: 20,250,000 acres in Colorado, 26,000,000 acres in Montana, 1,500,000 acres in New Mexico, 1,300,000 acres in Oregon, 3,000,000 acres in Washington, 11,900,000 acres in Wyoming.

Large areas in Utah have also been designated under a special provision in the act.

Under the "enlarged homestead" act residence must be established on the land by the entryman within six months from date of filing, and be continued, together with cultivation and improvement of the land, for five years. The law requires that one-eighth of the land be cultivated beginning with the second year, and one-fourth of the land beginning the third year, the latter area being required to be cultivated each year thereafter until date of final proof. The fee to be paid the register and receiver at time of original entry is not exceeding \$10. The commissions payable at the same time, also at date of final proof, are 3 per cent on the cash value of the land. No payment for the land homesteaded under this act is required to be made, except in cases where the lands were formerly embraced in Indian reservations and are required by law to be disposed of at a fixed price for the benefit of the Indians.

SOILS OF U. S. ARE NOT WEARING OUT

Department Expert Says Land in the United States Is Not Wearing Out.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 11.—Professor Whitney, who is chief of the bureau of soils of the department of agriculture, and the foremost authority on this subject in the country, makes an official and strenuous denial of the oft-repeated assertion that the soils of the United States are wearing out, and that crop yields are decreasing. On the contrary, he declares that farmers of this nation are getting more out of their soil than ever before.

"As a whole," Professor Whitney says, "it seems probable that we are producing more crops per acre than formerly. This is undoubtedly due to manufactors; to better and more intelligent cultivation, more and better systems of rotation of crops, and in later years to the intelligent use of fertilizers through measures of control in the hands of every individual farmer. In addition, we must recognize the increase in farm animals and stock, the improvement in seed by selection and breeding, and increased intensity in population, which is forcing attention to more intensive methods."

"So far as our information goes, there is apparently no significant difference at the present time between the composition of the old agricultural soils of Europe and the newer agricultural soils of the United States."

In the forthcoming bulletin of the bureau of soils are some interesting statistics to support this claim. For instance, figures show that the wheat yield in Wisconsin, Michigan, Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri in the period from 1867 to 1876 averaged 13 bushels per acre; in the period 1897-1906 the average was 14.1. The same ratio of increase is apparent throughout the country. There is a corresponding increase in all cereal crops throughout the United States for the past three or four decades.

In comparison, the bulletin points out that the wheat yield per acre in Russia during the period from 1883 to 1905 was from 5.7 to 10.3, while it rose to 11.1 in 1904, and dropped again to 9.4 in 1905.

Ireland makes a remarkable showing per acre in wheat yield—25.5 bushels in 1883, 34.8 bushels in 1906, and constantly increasing each year. The same is true in Great Britain, where the yield in 1906 was 34.7.



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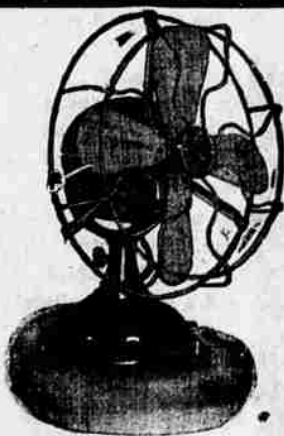
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