

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

BY HIS EXCELLENCY CALVIN COOLIDGE, GOVERNOR.

A PROCLAMATION.

The present condition of the food supply is such as to be a subject for serious consideration, if not serious alarm. The condition in the Commonwealth is but a part of the world condition. Food supplies are normally produced by some nations in excess of their needs, and are imported by others. The total world food supply is matched in normal times against the total world food requirements.

When the United States entered the war, food reserves were not exhausted. Large crops helped to delay exhaustion. When the war ended it was felt that the nations of Europe would quickly recover their food production, and that the crisis was over. This has not been accomplished to the degree expected. Large areas in eastern Europe which normally ship food to the world's markets have been in turmoil, and must be fed from the world's supply or starve. Food reserves are not yet completely gone, but are dangerously low.

In the United States our winter wheat crops promise but 450,000,000 bushels, compared with 731,000,000 last year. It has been impossible to prepare the usual acreage for spring wheat. The ruinously low prices of pork and beef last year — several dollars per hundred weight below the cost of production — compelled farmers to reduce their breeding-stocks, and this year's meat production will be below normal. Farmers cannot pay wages to compete with industry, and therefore cannot get help. Very serious decreases in acreage cannot be avoided.

New England farmers are under the added handicap of inadequate transportation. Fertilizers from sources outside the State are not yet delivered, and many fertilizer manufacturers will not accept orders for more than a percentage of amounts needed — they in turn are unable to get deliveries of raw materials necessary to manufacture. The pinch of transportation is felt also in feeding stuff. One of the largest houses doing business in New England has been obliged to withdraw all quotations and recall its salesmen, as it cannot get deliveries and has nothing to sell. The transportation systems are vital to New England in the matter of current food supplies. Our danger with inadequate transportation, and with inadequate stocks to draw upon, may readily be seen.

The weather has been little short of disastrous during the last two months. Farmers were unable, for lack of help, to do the usual amount of fall plowing. They are now further retarded, as much land is not yet in condition to work.

To meet this situation the agricultural college and the county farm bureaus began work immediately after the crop season of 1919. Farmers were assisted in so planning their work for this year that man power, machinery and land should be used to produce the most necessary crops with least dependence on hired help. Every effort was made to get early placing of orders for fertilizers, seeds and machinery. Seed potatoes were engaged in many cases last fall. Much assistance has been given in the matter of testing seed for vitality and germination. The uniform report from the agricultural counties of the State is to the effect that farmers are planning to plant all the acreage which can be prepared under the handicap of unfavorable weather and insufficient help. In view of these facts further appeal to farmers to increase production is both futile and unjust. They are now doing their utmost.

The college and county agricultural agents have urged the greater planting of home gardens. In all farm bureau offices a supply of garden bulletins is provided, and much time has already been spent in locating supplies of seed and fertilizers. Press articles have been furnished giving

further advice and warnings as to methods and mistakes. Many reports came to us to the effect that there is a growing interest in home gardens; that those who got experience in war gardening are better prepared than before; and that industrial plants are again asking assistance in planning for gardens for their operatives.

Last year over 50,000 boys and girls were assisted by the Junior Extension workers in the counties and at the college, in productive work. Calls for assistance this year show a still greater demand on the time and efforts of these agents. We also receive testimony to the effect that many of these boys and girls set the pace for their families, and that the indirect increase in production is even greater than the direct increase.

Realizing that much garden produce is wasted, the college and the home demonstration agents in the counties are prepared to furnish information on methods of canning and preserving surplus products. Our specialist in horticultural manufactures is working with organizations of farmers in the matter of equipment to utilize second-grade fruits and to prevent their wastage.

One of the greatest causes of wastage is improper cellar storage for winter vegetables. To meet this the college prepared during the war a bulletin on the building of proper cool storage in cellars. Where such storage is provided it is a measure of insurance against loss, and also enables the householder to buy in quantity at a lower price such supplies of potatoes, turnips, apples and other winter requirements as he may not have been able to raise. A supply of these bulletins is available at all farm bureau offices and at the State Department of Agriculture.

I am requesting the Legislature to make a special appropriation of \$7,500 to establish camps and supervise and distribute students from the public schools in places where they can be given employment on the farms.

In view of all these facts I urgently call on such agencies as the schools, churches, labor and fraternal organizations to induce the public in general to raise what food is possible by gardens and otherwise, thus capitalizing the extra hour

of daylight so as to increase the total supply of food. Even though such action does not appear to result in the saving of money, it will result in the saving of food that will be necessary for our use during the next winter season. The emergency is very urgent, and every means should be taken to meet it, and to meet it now.



Given at the Executive Chamber, in Boston, this twentieth day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and twenty, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and forty-fourth.

CALVIN COOLIDGE.

By His Excellency the Governor.

ALBERT P. LANGTRY,

Secretary of the Commonwealth.

God Save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.