FARM LABOUR DROPS STEADILY, FURTHER DEPLETION EXPECTED

Workers Are at Liberty to Leave and Are Doing Just That

WAGES ARE BETTER

Ottawa, Aug. 25.—(CP)—The farmer's son and the hired man have marched away from the old homestead in the greatest exodus in the history of rural Canada, federal government figures revealed today.

A survey of the labour situation showed:
1. Male hired help on farms between January 1, 1940, and March 15, 1942, showed a net decrease of more than 141,800, or 13.2 per cent.
2. Male hired help at January 15 was estimated at 149,900, compared with 247,800 on January 15, 1940.

Although a selective service regulation issued in March was designed to freeze men on the farm to maintain production, officials said the farm man power supplies were likely to be further depleted. They recalled that Agriculture Minister Gardiner had warned of further probable losses to the farm labour brigade when he spoke in the house of commons July 25 and said the 429,000 single men between 16 and 45 engaged in agriculture March 31 represented one of two pools of man power from which more men could be drawn for military service if large numbers were required.

Meantime, farm workers are at liberty to leave the farm and join the forces if they wish—and they are doing it.

Officials said their figures covered earlier periods of this year and probably showed the farm labour picture in rosier colours than it actually was at present. The movement of men from the farm to the forces has continued steadily throughout the year.

The Economic Analyst, published by the agriculture department, said that Nova Scotia, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan showed the largest net decreases in male family help between 1940 and 1942, while the smallest decreases occurred in Quebec and Ontario.

The farm labour survey had revealed the reduction in the number of male hired help in the two years was 98,900, or about 12,000 more than the total of 87,500 who joined the armed forces or left farms for other employment.

The survey was conducted by sending questionnaires to one of every 25 farmers on rural mail lists.

Wages Higher

In all provinces, yearly help wages were higher in 1942, with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick showing the largest increases over 1941, averaging 36 per cent, and 27 per cent, respectively. For all Canada, the average yearly wage in 1942 was $411, against $336 in 1941.

Male family help on farms in 1942 averaged 125 for every 100 farms and in Canada in 1942, compared with 141 in 1941, a decrease of 10.6 in the one-year period.

The movement of farmers' sons from the farm accelerated in 1941. An average of 14.5 sons from every 100 farms enlisted in the forces or left for employment in the city, compared with a total of 9.2 sons for every 100 farms in 1940. In 1940, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Alberta all reported more than 15 farmers' sons per 100 farms leaving for the forces or war industries.