THE FARM LABOR BUREAU

The consideration of the structure of the Farm Labor Bureaus which are to carry out this program of adaptation to the land must start out from certain fundamental principles and be based on facts. The principles on which they must rest are: first, the existence of every institution is justified only by the demand for it. The Farm Labor Bureau does not seek apprentices but is created only when there is sufficient demand for it; second, the process of training is to be, to as great an extent as possible, a reproduction of that which awaits the apprentice in his life as an independent farmer.

The first principle flows directly out of the conception of the land settlement problem as discussed in a previous chapter. Since the adoption of a land policy must be based on a quantitatively determined demand for it, and since migration to the land implies a change in the mode of life, no influence must be brought to bear on the individual which could in any way act as the slightest inducement for him to take up farming. This provision is of great importance since many land companies exaggerate the attractions of a constant "communion with nature." Several states have been guilty of the same mistake in an attempt to attract settlers.

The second principle is the logical result of the conception of the Farm Labor Bureau as a test of the demand based on preparation and adaptability to farm life. In order to live up to this principle the structure of the Farm Labor Bureau must be simple. The nucleus of the whole must be a small organization of men sent out to work on farms. The central administration will come into contact with these organizations and with the apprentices through the medium of extension workers. For the success of the scheme, the co-operation of the Colleges of Agriculture will be essential. It would be idle to attempt to construct a detailed plan of the structure of this Farm Labor Bureau because of the variability of factors and the material out of which the apprentices are to be recruited. Having these considerations in mind, the best plan would be to build up a small organization of apprentices and start the work with it. The building up of a larger organization will be conditioned by the progress of this small unit as well as by the demand for it. The exact relation of the central administration to the various units as well as its policies will be shaped accordingly and will be the result of observation made of the work of the nucleus of the Bureau.

Having established these principles it is important to determine whether farmers will be willing to hire the men the Bureau will send them. While this question cannot be answered affirmatively, certain facts characteristic of the farming industry in America will justify us in saying that generally the farmers will be willing to take in men on this basis.
One of these facts is the peculiarity of the relations of the hired man to his farmer-employer. The hired man working on a farm must, in order to be efficient, be in an entirely different relation to his employer than the workingman in a large factory. In a large factory the division of labor is carried to an extreme. Each man performs a simple operation. The arrangement in the factory, because of this extreme division of labor, is such that a system of watching the workman do his work efficiently can be easily devised. The workingman does not necessarily need to take a very strong interest in his work because the work is purely mechanical and because he can be easily watched. The case of the farm hand is entirely different. The man working on a farm has many different things to do. The greatest part of his work will keep him out in the fields away from the farmstead. He is out of the reach of his employer most of the time. Besides, there are many operations in farming where the employer will have to rely upon the loyalty of his man to do the work right even though it is performed in the precincts of the farm home, for instance, treating the cattle gently, not overworking the horses, etc. It is clear then, that the hired man’s relation to the farm if he wants to have his work worth anything, must be that of loyalty. And it is this quality that should be most frequently found in young men who go out on the farm to learn as well as to work, because in their desire to learn, they will acquire an interest in their work and try to perform it with as much skill as possible.

A further stimulus to good work and good will on the part of the hired man will be the prospect of acquiring a farm on the terms stipulated above after a successful period of apprenticeship.

The good will which an inexperienced man will develop under these conditions combined with a system of training in practical farming will be of sufficient inducement to farmers to cooperate with the Farm Labor Bureau, especially, and this is an important consideration, in view of the scarcity of farm labor prevailing in the country.

The question of wages is important. As a rule, a man cannot expect to earn more than his board and clothes the first winter. Sometimes, however, the farmer will give him even during the first winter, five or ten dollars a month besides. But when spring comes there is no reason why an average man should not be able to earn at least $20 a month. In summer he might earn as high as $25. The second winter he should be in most cases able to find work on a large dairy farm and earn twenty, twenty-five and even thirty dollars a month. The second spring and summer he ought to be able to earn $30 to $35 a month. If in some cases it is impossible to find work in winter, he might find work in some industry connected with farming such as cheese factories or creameries. In the

*The figures of wages are those of normal pre-war times. The wages have risen considerably since the World War.
extreme case he could go out for the winter to the city and work in some industry which is busy at that particular season. In this case he will spend later on a few more months in spring and summer on a farm to complete his three years requirements. The objection may be made that few men will be willing to go out on these wages in view of the present high wages in cities, but it is again well to point out at this juncture that the only men who are wanted in the Farm Labor Bureau are those who have a real and earnest desire to leave their present occupation and to seek new opportunities at the risk of some immediate sacrifices.

Another condition which will furnish the Farm Labor Bureau with a working basis is the characteristics of the dairy farm industry. The dairy farms are especially adapted for such kind of work because of various reasons. The work is varied and thus can be made more interesting. There is a longer season of work and with the gradual introduction of winter dairying it will be made still longer. Moreover dairy farming is gradually extending its area and in the future will afford the greatest opportunity for profitable enterprises on a small scale.

When we come to the consideration of the difficulties which may hamper the work of the Farm Labor Bureau the chief ones are, in the opinion of the writer, possible misunderstandings between the farmer and the apprentice. And, indeed, the relations of the farmer to his hired man are not purely the relations of an employer to an employee. They are, to a great extent, patriarchal. The hired man, when working for a farmer, is placed in the position of hired man and a member of the farmer's family at the same time. Even as a workingman, he is bound to be more loyal to his employer than an average factory employee. Farming is an industry which cannot be strictly regulated according to hours and time clocks; sometimes a man has to put in a few more hours; often when rain is predicted for the next day he has to remain in the field until 9 or 10 o'clock in the evening to cover up hay so as to protect it until it can be hauled to the barn. Imagine how a man would take this who was working in a factory for a number of years and was used to regular hours. The misunderstandings between the hired man and his employer will arise on this basis. It will seem to him continually that he is treated unjustly, while in fact he is fulfilling the fundamental prerequisites of the average farm hand. Another misunderstanding which comes up quite often between the farmer and his hired man results from the fact that the employer is the manager as well as the co-worker of his employees, and when once in a while he has to attend to some of his managerial activities and lets his hired man attend to some of the work alone, the hired man will consider it a personal insult and will start grumbling. This state of mind grows crescendo because the employer and his man have to live in close contact. In the observation of the writer most of the serious clashes between farmers and their hired men usually start from such trifling incidents which because of constant contact
after working hours assume a disproportionate magnitude. The only way to obviate this difficulty which may be considered fundamental is through the mediation of a third person who in this case ought to be an extension worker.

It may be safely stated that there is no scheme of social reform and no plan of organization of a new institution which will ever come out true to specifications. In any practical application of a scheme of that order many currents will be encountered whose existence the author of the scheme cannot foresee and which by their action will tend to divert from its course the process of application of an ideal program to life. In the subject under consideration these currents may be safely assumed to be of a nature which might not only hamper the work of adaptation but destroy it at the very inception because of the numerous psychic factors which a change in the mode of life of purely urban people, as the Jews are, involves. The task of steering safely the process of adaptation through these currents will be the duty of the instructor or extension worker. It must be remembered that the work of this Bureau will have to be tested by observing the work of the first small organization which will be formed. This initial step will naturally be the hardest and its success will hinge to a very large extent on the personality of the extension worker whose duty it will be to supervise the training of the apprentice on the plan outlined above. From what has been said in this chapter it is easy to see that efficient leadership will depend on a knowledge of actual farming operations and on an intimate understanding of the men with whom the instructor will have to deal. It will depend largely on the power to observe how certain characteristics of the men conflict with their new work and environment and the ability to mould these characteristics so as to make them contribute to the process of adaptation. This knowledge can be developed in an instructor only by contact with the actual farm life which means that a future leader in this work must have gone through the same process as the men who will be under his charge. He must understand the peculiarities of farm life, the racial characteristics and the psychical make-up of the farming population. It is a combination of these qualities which will enable the extension worker to facilitate the process of adaptation to farm life with a minimum of friction.

The real source, however, from which the apprentice in farming will be expected to gather the strength necessary to overcome all the difficulties of the process of adaptation is his own will and determination to become a farmer. Outside of the difficulties mentioned above there is another one namely the comparative isolation of farms in America, which will be an obstacle to the work of the Farm Labor Bureau. But this and other obstacles can be overcome only when the apprentices have the same attitude towards the land as had the pioneers who in the early history of Western Expansion broke up the land, fought the Indians, faced danger and went through innumerable hardships with only one ideal in mind.—
to live on the land. Jewish young men who are willing to undergo this process of adaptation are expected to be pioneers of a Jewish farming class. They have at their disposal opportunities of which the old pioneers of American farming never dreamt. If their desire to become farmers is not strong enough to help them overcome the inconveniences and difficulties of the process of adaptation with all the opportunities that are offered to them they do not form a desirable class of settlers.

It is important to consider the question raised in a previous chapter as to how these men will get to the land, since an opening of uncultivated land on a large scale is not contemplated immediately. Because of the nature of the preparation it is evident the demand for land in this case will not be sudden, but will be gradual. There is the additional advantage in that it can be foreseen a long time ahead and therefore this demand for land can be satisfied by the existing offer of sale of farms or by the opening to cultivation of idle lands on a small scale. Because it will be gradual it will obviate the danger of a sudden rise in prices of land, which would necessarily be the result of a sudden demand for it. Another important thing to take into consideration is that so far as the majority of applicants for land from cities are concerned, it is more desirable for them to buy ready made farms than to migrate to newly opened lands on which they are liable to make a failure because of pioneer conditions of life and work.

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TENANCY AS A STAGE IN THE PROCESS OF ADAPTA.
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Let us now consider a man who has completed a period of apprenticeship according to the plan outlined in this monograph. He is found fit for farming for two reasons: (a) He is assimilated to farm life. (b) He is capable of performing the various farm operations. The question arises, is he capable of independently managing a farm?

As a farmhand he has not had the opportunity to test his managerial abilities. Although a farmhand is to a certain extent a partner of his employer in the working of a farm, still he performs his duties under supervision and does not have the responsibility in planning the work on a farm, in buying the necessary supplies and marketing the farm products. It happens very often that a farmhand, although very efficient in his work, is helpless when left in charge of a farm even for a short time. It is obvious that a farm representing a considerable investment requires not only a knowledge of the various phases of farm work but the ability to manage it in such a manner as to make it yield a profit both on the capital invested and the managerial services rendered without injury to the soil, the buildings and the improvements. In order to complete