

## SOIL SAVER

*The Federal Government is demonstrating proper methods of cultivation to prevent erosion through run-off. The first picture shows a strip-cropped area on fertile Idaho rolling land.*

Soil Conservation Service Photo.

## WRECKAGE

*Like tombstones, the jagged stumps shown in lower photo are mute evidence of wasteful destruction of once virgin forests. Note beginning of gully erosion in lower right foreground.*

United States Forest Service Photo.





## WHY THE LAND IS UNPRODUCTIVE

How did these barren farms ever come to be settled? There is no simple answer to this question. In some cases, the soil was originally fertile. Improper cultivation has exhausted its fertility, and erosion has washed away the good soil. This is what has happened to the farmlands of the Piedmont district, the Appalachian foothills, and the Ozarks. There is no fertile soil left on the rocky, clay slopes which the farmers in these regions try to cultivate.

In other cases, the land never was, and never can be, fit for farming. This is true of large areas in the Lake States. These areas were once covered with thick forest. People came to work in the lumber camps and sawmills. When the trees had all been cut down, employment stopped. Many people stayed on and tried to farm the poor land. It was hopeless.

In the West there are the lands of the Dust Bowl region. Originally this region was covered with plentiful range grass which did not need much rain. In the early days of the pioneers, great herds of buffalo lived and thrived on this grass, and there were no dust storms to cloud the limitless horizon of the Plains.

But higher prices paid for wheat and development of farm machinery led many people to plow up and farm these lands. In unusually wet years they produced a crop, where normally lack of rain makes crop farming impracticable on this land. But in plowing under the grass which had kept the soil anchored for thousands of years they exposed the land to the parching sun and the sweeping wind. And year after year of drought and dust storms are tending to make large areas of this region an arid desert.

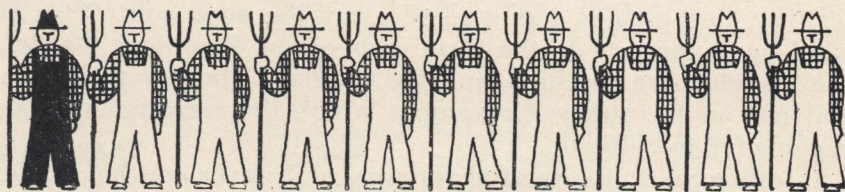
## THE GOVERNMENT'S PART

It is obvious that the people living on this land are not responsible for the fix they are in. It is obvious that they cannot get out of it unaided, because long years of drought and unsuccessful crops have left them without enough money to move to other land. They cannot contribute to the State and county for the upkeep of roads and schools. Many of them have been forced on relief.

The Resettlement Administration has been established on the theory that it is wasteful and useless to distribute temporary relief—food and clothing—in such areas because there is

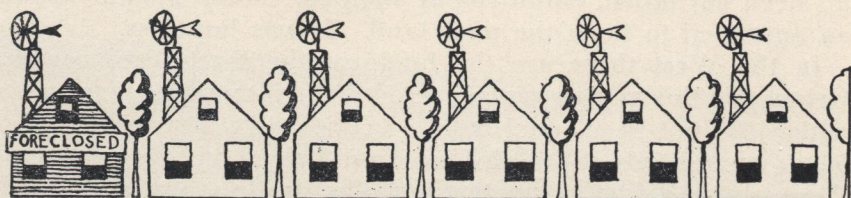


little hope that the people living there will ever be able to support themselves. It is therefore using the funds which would be spent for temporary relief over a period of a year or two to buy these lands and help these people to move to good farms.



## LAND USE

*One out of ten farmers live on land unsuited for successful farming.*



## FARM DEBT

*One out of six farms foreclosed during depression.*



Resettlement Administration Photo.

## HAPPY FAMILY

*Good housing and a garden combined with sunlight and fresh air in a Resettlement Administration community at El Monte, Calif., mean better health and better living standards.*



## II

# RURAL RESETTLEMENT



THE problem, then, of the Resettlement Administration is to help these people who are stranded on barren, unproductive farms.

The only permanent solution of this problem is to help these farmers move to better land. That is, they must be given a chance to resettle on farms that will produce crops that pay. This work is called rural resettlement. It is one part of the work of the Resettlement Administration.

Of course, the Government cannot hope to resettle all of these 650,000 families. This is a long-time job and demands the cooperation of the Federal Government, States, counties, local organizations, and individuals. The present program provides for the resettlement of 22,000 families who have suffered most severely.

The first thing that is being done is to buy the farms owned by these people. About half of them, 11,000 families, will need no help beyond this. The money they get from the sale of their farms will enable them to move to better land.

But the other 11,000 families live on rented land, or owe so much on their mortgages that they will get little or nothing from the sale of their farms. The resettlement of these families must be financed by the Government.

## RESETTLEMENT OF THE 11,000 FAMILIES

The plan is simple; the Government grubstakes these people to a new start. It buys good land, does what building has to be done, helps the settlers move to the new land and advises them how best to farm it.

In some cases the new farms will be rented to the settlers. In other cases, they will be sold; the money spent by the Government will be regarded as a loan payable over a long period of years. In all instances, the Government will be paid back the money it has spent. That is, the work will be self-liquidating.





Resettlement Administration Photo.

## BARREN LIVING

*Poor housing and impoverished lives—products of exhausted acres.*

## NEW HOPE

*Given a chance to own a good house on good land, many families are finding new economic opportunities in Resettlement community homes.*





Resettlement Administration Photo.

## TRENCHES

*The front lines of erosion creep up the pastureland shown in upper picture as the run-off of little waters cuts into the soil.*

## DESOLATION

*Small ditches, like those in the upper picture, soon grow into giant gullies destroying the good earth. A few years of unchecked erosion have laid waste to these once fertile acres.*



### III

## LAND USE



IT IS NATURAL to ask what is going to be done with the old farms which these people have left. This brings us to a problem which is hardly less serious than rural poverty.

We have seen that these barren farms cannot be made to grow crops. But that does not mean that there is no profitable use to which they can be turned. The land on many of these farms is good for trees or grass. In other cases, the land can be converted into game preserves or public parks where the general public can camp, hike, fish, and enjoy the out-of-doors.

This work of turning the land to its best use is called Land Utilization. Like Rural Resettlement it is part of the program of the Resettlement Administration and is organized in a separate division.

### THE WASTE OF OUR LAND

It is important to all of us that this land be used in the proper way. We are all paying the price of its having been misused in the past. For example, we think that the choking dust storms of 1934 were unavoidable. The truth is that they could have been largely prevented if we had taken the right steps in time.

The areas devastated by the dust storms were originally grassland where great herds of buffalo grazed. Then, the first settlers came and the buffalo gave way to cattle run on the open range. Later, when the era of the cowboy had passed, the land was taken up by homesteaders who converted it to crop farming. The grass, whose roots had held the topsoil in place was plowed under. This was the vital mistake. For when drought took the moisture out of the soil there was nothing to hold it down, and the wind blew it away in black, choking clouds. This land, fit only for grazing, never should have been farmed.

The heaviest cost is the destruction of a large area of rich grassland. The whole Nation is just so much poorer by its loss. There are more immediate costs. We have mentioned



## COUNTERATTACK

*Reforestation is one of man's weapons against erosion. CCC workers are shown selling out seedlings in a national forest.*

United States Forest Service Photo.

## HALTED

*Gully erosion stopped by check dam on Resettlement Administration recreation area at Crabtree Creek, N. C.*

Resettlement Administration Photo.





that in three counties alone in the Dust Bowl area some \$7,000,000 has been spent on relief and loans since 1930. That is a burden on the Nation, as well as on the State and counties. Then there are the excessive tax burdens on others because of the fact that much of this land pays no taxes. Schools and roads must be built, but the ruined wheat farms cannot contribute their share.

### **A GRAZING PROJECT**

In the Plains area the Resettlement Administration is buying up dust-burned farms. Pasture grasses will be reseeded on them and they will be joined with other nearby lands to make stock ranges. The cover of grass will hold the topsoil in place and end the blowing of the dust. A vast area, devastated by drought and dust storms, will be made a profitable part of our national economy.

### **FLOOD CONTROL**

Floods, like dust storms, can be checked by human efforts. The severity of recent floods in the Mississippi Valley is due in great measure to the cultivation of land which should be left in grass or forest. The roots of grass and trees absorb water and check its downward flow. When they are destroyed, the water from the spring rains rushes down to the streams taking with it the soil, and swells and chokes the flow of the main rivers.

Large areas in the Lake States region were stripped clean of their abundant timber by lumber crews. When the timber was gone, many people tried to raise crops on the denuded land, which would not hold moisture or support any but sparse and puny plant life. They failed in spite of all their efforts. They were stranded. Many of them are being helped to relocate on good soil.

Trees will be planted on many of the farms being purchased. This will help in preventing floods. At the same time, instead of poor farmland rapidly wasting away there will be forests of constantly growing value.

### **RECREATION PROJECTS**

In the eastern part of the United States much of the land being bought cannot be turned to any use that is profitable in terms of cash. However, a small investment will make it possible to turn these districts into public parks. This will give the people who live in the nearby cities the badly needed opportunity for outdoor exercise and sport.





United States Forest Service Photo.

## ORDER

*Good forest practice—trees cut low, brush piled and young trees left to insure a future crop of timber. Scene on the Black Hills National Forest, S. Dak.*

Resettlement Administration Photo.

## RECREATION

*The Resettlement Administration is converting millions of substandard acres to better uses. This scene was taken on the Falls Creek Falls project in Tennessee where people from nearby cities will have an opportunity to enjoy themselves out of doors.*



This will show what is to be done with the unproductive land of the stranded farm families. Altogether, about 10 million acres of land will be improved or used for other purposes. This is more than the area covered by the farms of the people being resettled, since it is sometimes necessary to buy adjoining and intervening lands in order to round out the area to be improved.

This work of conserving the land is the other side of the problem of rural poverty. The most pressing need, of course, is to relieve human distress. At the same time ways must be devised of making this unproductive land useful to the whole country.

## FLOOD TOLL

*Many floods, causing heavy losses in life and property, result from faulty land use.*

American Red Cross Photo.







Resettlement Administration Photo.

## HELP

*Work stock obtained through rehabilitation loans is helping hundreds of thousands of farm families to reestablish themselves.*



# **IV**

## **RURAL**

### **REHABILITATION**



AS WE MENTIONED, there is another way the farmers in distress are being helped. When they have good land, loans are made to them so they can get on their feet again and become self-supporting. This is called "rural rehabilitation."

#### **THE LOANS**

These loans are made to farmers of good character whose land is productive, but who do not have the seed, tools, animals, and other things necessary to raise a crop. Most of these people were self-supporting some years ago. But the depression in agriculture wiped out their capital and they cannot get started again without assistance.

Some of the loans are for 5 years, others for 2. The 5-year loans are meant to cover the heavier costs of farming. They are used to buy livestock, farm implements, and poultry; to repair buildings and fences, and in some cases to refinance chattel mortgages. The 2-year loans are for the payment of rent, the purchase of seed, fertilizer and feed, of food, clothing, fuel, and the like.

All loans carry interest and are secured by crop liens and mortgages; but great reliance is placed on character and good reputation.

During the first year of its activity, the Resettlement Administration aided some 500,000 farm families by its rehabilitation program.

#### **EMERGENCY GRANTS**

Occasionally the families are so destitute that they must get immediate relief. Emergency grants, a form of relief, are made to these people. They are simply intended to provide food, fuel, clothing, and indispensable medical aid while plans for loans are being made.

#### **FARM MANAGEMENT PLANS**

Often the difficulties of these farmers are due to lack of skill in managing their farms. To make sure that the land is put to



## PLANNED

*Part of the farm management plan aids farm wives to provide for adequate diet needs by preserving fruits and vegetables.*

## NEW START

*Undeclared by the depression, this couple, through a Resettlement Administration loan, is once again self-supporting.*

Resettlement Administration Photo.





its best use, experts help the farmers who are receiving loans to make plans for running their farms. These plans are worked out by the farmer, the local county agent of the Department of Agriculture, and the county supervisor of the Resettlement Administration. The farmer must agree to abide by their conditions.

The need for this advice can easily be illustrated. Many farmers, because of high interest payments, feel obligated to put all their land in cash crops, such as tobacco, cotton or wheat, and raise practically nothing for their own needs. A bad year puts them in debt and leaves them nothing with which to buy food.

These farmers are advised to raise food and feed for their own use. They are encouraged to grow more of their own supplies and to depend less on cash income. This is one way the advice of experts can help the farmers become self-supporting.

### **FARM DEBT ADJUSTMENT**

Many of the heavy farm mortgages were contracted during boom times. Prices were up and the farms were given a high value. Since then the value of the farms has greatly decreased. At prevailing prices for farm products, it is impossible for the farmers to pay off these mortgages. It is to the interest of both the creditors and the debtors, to have these mortgages scaled down to a reasonable sum. Often the creditor, as well as the debtor, loses if a mortgage is foreclosed.

The Resettlement Administration organizes committees of local citizens who try to get the debtors and creditors to come to an agreement, reducing the principal or interest rates or extending the time in which debts may be paid. Membership on these committees is entirely voluntary and no one is paid for serving on them. This work is called Farm Debt Adjustment.

That this plan has worked out very successfully can be shown by the following figures: During a 3-month period in 1935, debts of some 4,000 farmers were adjusted from \$20,000,000 to \$13,500,000—a reduction of \$6,500,000, or over 32 percent.





ACME Newsphoto.

## PENNY AUCTION

*Two nooses dangle, a grim warning to outsiders against bidding on the farm of a foreclosed mortgagor. Scenes like that in upper photo in which farms "sold" for a few cents were not unusual in the Midwest before the Federal Government took steps to ease the serious farm credit situation.*

## CONTRAST

Resettlement Administration Photo.

*The Resettlement Administration, through its Farm Debt Adjustment Service, is assisting thousands of debtors and creditors to adjust their obligations satisfactorily.*



## V

# SUBURBAN RESETTLEMENT



THIS PHASE OF the activities of the Resettlement Administration concerns itself with city workmen and farmers who live near industrial areas.

Our suburban resettlement program differs from the usual slum-clearance program in various ways. The houses are built in the suburbs, where land is cheaper, instead of in already overcrowded cities. It differs further insofar as areas with productive farm land have been selected. This will enable neighboring farmers to earn a livelihood with a ready-made market. It will also enable tenants to engage in farming as a recreation or on a part-time basis to supplement their incomes. A third difference is that the suburban resettlement community will be complete, with its own postoffice, stores, town hall, inn, schools, churches, and recreational grounds, instead of being a row of houses or apartments.

Each community will be laid out on approximately 200 cleared acres and will be surrounded by farm areas and woodland; thus preventing undesirable industrial development in the future.

The Greenbelt idea is not new. England has two successful Greenbelt communities. In our country there are a number of "Garden Cities"; but unfortunately such dwelling places are beyond the means of our low-income workers.

In these Greenbelt communities, homes, though not elaborate, will be well designed and well built. They will have all sanitary improvements and there will be sufficient open space to give the word "home" a real meaning.

These communities will be safe and healthy places to live. Wherever footpaths cross busy streets, underpasses will be built. Automobile roads will skirt the community rather than run through it. There will be ample recreation space.

Residents of Greenbelt towns will assume their fair share of local taxes and the community will have the same political status as similar towns in the State.





Resettlement Administration Photo.

## CROWDED

*Ill health and low living standards always accompany slum-congested areas.*

## SPACED

*This architect's drawing of one of the greenbelt communities now being constructed by the Resettlement Administration shows how town-planning makes possible inexpensive and healthy housing facilities.*



## A LONG-TIME PROGRAM

THE PURPOSE of the Resettlement Administration is not to give mere temporary relief. The problems it deals with are not new ones. They have their roots deep in the past. And none of them—the building of rural or suburban communities, the rehabilitation of worthy but destitute farmers, or the restoration of misused land to its proper use—can be solved fully in a short time. The Resettlement Administration, however, is making a definite start.

The rehabilitation program, as well as being a much-needed present help to farm families, is an asset to the Nation's future. With this means of helping farmers to become reestablished on their own farms by lending them money and working out farm management plans, Resettlement reaches a large number of families. It is the aim of the Resettlement Administration to rehabilitate these farmers permanently.

The land use problem in its very name suggests the background of many years. It was old in China before this country was discovered. It is comparatively new here, but we are going to do something about it. We are first of all giving the farmer a chance to get off his barren acres and to earn a living on more fertile soil. The land also is benefiting. Range grass, necessary to replenish the pasture domain of the ranchers and to provide a protective covering to prevent dust blowing, is replanted on land that is too dry to raise crops. Trees are planted on hilly cutover regions. Land which is too swampy or mountainous to cultivate is often used as a refuge for game. Some tracts, especially if they are near a large city, are made into parks where the Nation's citizens can go for recreation and outdoor life.

Town, country, and open range—we have always been proud of the opportunities which this country offers to those who are worthy and industrious. We have been proud of our country's spaciousness both in opportunity and in land. A chance for the city child to live in decent surroundings. A chance for the competent but unfortunate farmer to get back on his own feet.



## TRAPPED

*The children pictured in upper photo in crowded slum areas must either play in the dangerous city streets or in small cluttered backyards such as this.*

## CAREFREE

*Protected and dead-end streets in a resettlement suburban community give children freedom and safety.*

Resettlement Administration Photo.





Tall forests, fertile valleys, boundless plains covered with waving grass, rich river bottoms—land for lumber and forest products, land for farming, land for cattle raising and dairying, land for great grain crops. These are not vain memories buried in the past or fond dreams lost in the future. These are the inevitable results of facing courageously and intelligently the realities of today.



*FOR FURTHER INFORMATION WRITE  
RESETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATION  
WASHINGTON, D. C.*



## REGIONAL OFFICES

1. New Haven, Conn.  
Connecticut, Delaware, Maine,  
Maryland, Massachusetts, New  
Hampshire, New Jersey, New  
York, Pennsylvania, Rhode  
Island, Vermont.
2. Madison, Wis.  
Minnesota, Michigan, Wis-  
consin.
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