THE WAR AND OUR CHANGING AGRICULTURE

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This topic recognizes that agriculture is constantly changing, and suggests that the present war should be considered, not only in relation to a stationary picture of American agriculture taken as of December 1940, but also in connection with the changes that characterized our agriculture in the past and that were influencing its future when the war began. In the wording your program committee gave a helpful suggestion on how the subject should be treated.

Agronomists, accustomed as they are to dealing with natural forces, probably are inclined to take a long view of change. Economists, however, usually deal with issues of the moment and may lose sight of forces that are reflected in long trends often temporarily obscured by current events. Perhaps we would improve our perspective and judge the present more clearly if we should more often consider present problems, including the economic impacts of this war, in relation to historical forces and long-time change.

The war and related disturbances among nations necessitated our defense program, and both are closely related so far as now concerns their economic influence upon agriculture. The main outline of this influence may be summarized very briefly.

EFFECTS DEPEND ON SCOPE, LENGTH, AND OUTCOME OF WAR

The defense program has stimulated and will further stimulate industrial activity, prices, employment, consumer income, and domestic demand for farm products. The extent and scope of that program and of the economic stimulus from it depend on the scope and duration of the war, the sort of peace that will follow, and the situation that confronts our nation and this hemisphere in the post-war world.

Foreign markets have virtually disappeared, and prospects for their revival are decidedly unfavorable. In general, the commodities mainly on a domestic market basis will be influenced more by the

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