

### NEW FURROWS A Column For Farmers

The tax burden on farmers has assumed such proportions in recent years that today it is one of the major economic problems in the rural sections.

That's a bad way to start a column. Only the other day we asked a man if he'd read an editorial in The Post about the difficulty of collecting taxes in local townships. "No," he admitted, "I've seen so much about taxes I never read anything about them any more." So we've probably shooed away most potential readers with our opening. Anybody that wants to ride along the rest of the way is welcome. This is about farm taxes, like it or not.

There is no other problem confronting the farmer for which legislation is so essential in its solution and for which the farmer has more reason to expect governmental action.

That the tax burden on farmers in this state is larger than their relative share in the income in the state is an established fact. This isn't due particularly to any sinister design on the part of legislators. It is caused by the slowness in adjusting the system of taxation to changing economic conditions.

At one time tangible property was the source of nearly all governmental revenues. In the evolution of industry and commerce and the rapid growths of the corporate form of ownership of business, many other sources of income have developed so that today ownership of tangible property is a very inadequate measure of a man's income. Income, not property, should be the basis of tax assessment today. But real estate is still compelled to carry a major part of the taxation burden.

There are a number of inequalities in the taxes levied on farmers. For example almost the entire local-tax burden now

rests on real estate. The greatest percentage of local taxes goes to maintain the schools. That means that farmers are paying sizable chunks of money each year to maintain schools which, according to authoritative surveys, devote from one-third to one-half of their time training future citizens for cities and towns.

Obviously we cannot expect such cities and towns to finance rural school systems. But we can demand that the State assume greater responsibility in helping the rural school districts, thereby lifting some of the burden on farm real estate.

There are three primary steps to be taken in relieving the farm of its unjust burden of taxes, and farmers should know what they are so they can be prepared to advocate and support legislation which benefits them.

There should be (1) A shifting of more of the costs of schools and of township roads from rural real estate to the other sources of income; (2) better assessments, in order that the burden on local property may be more equally distributed, and (3) greater economy in the expenditure of the money.

If farmers work together for the accomplishments of these three objectives they can look forward to the day when their bank accounts will be larger and their tax bill smaller.

Employment for thousands of Pennsylvanians and new markets at good prices for Keystone State farm products have

been created during the last three years through expansion of the State's canning industry, an industry which would very nicely fit into conditions about Dallas.

The last three years have witnessed tremendous growth of the canning industry in Pennsylvania. Last year three big canning companies established plants in the state, other canneries increased their production and a number of small plants were opened.

One of the nation's largest food processors has just purchased an \$800,000 factory building in Milton. This new cannery will open with 200 employees and is contracting with farmers for the production of 1,000 acres of peas, beans, tomatoes and other vegetables.

In 1935 seventeen new canneries opened in Pennsylvania, giving employment to 1,361 wage earners who were paid \$255,500 that year.

Co-operation given the canneries by the State Department of Agriculture through its division of fruit and vegetable inspection and the high quality of Pennsylvania farm products have combined to attract new canneries to this state, according to J. Hansel French, Secretary of Agriculture.

Secretary French has encouraged this growing Pennsylvania industry by increasing the personnel of the division of fruit and vegetable inspection 50 per cent, by establishing official grades for peas, by extending State inspection to peas and

corn and by conducting twenty regional schools for State inspectors and preparing for licensure 200 young men of the 1,000 who attended the schools.

Last year State inspectors tested 160,000,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables for canning. In spite of the serious handicap of a wet canning season the 1937 volume exceeded that of 1936 by 25,000,000 pounds.

State inspection makes it possible for the canneries to buy graded products from the farmer at premium prices. Canneries availing themselves of this service have captured the cream of the market and were able to pay farmers high prices last fall when prices for farm products fell sharply throughout the nation.

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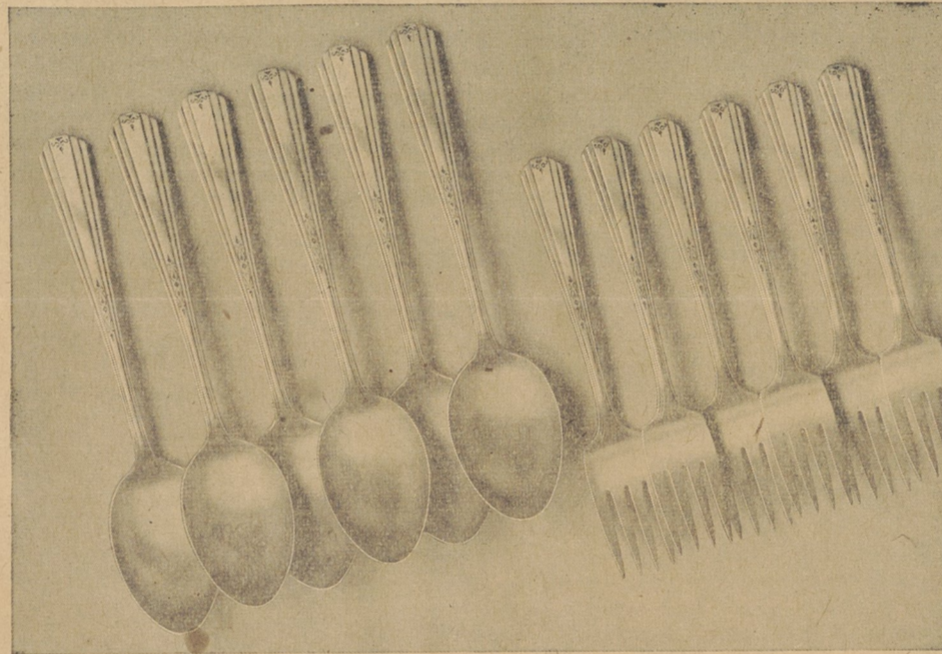
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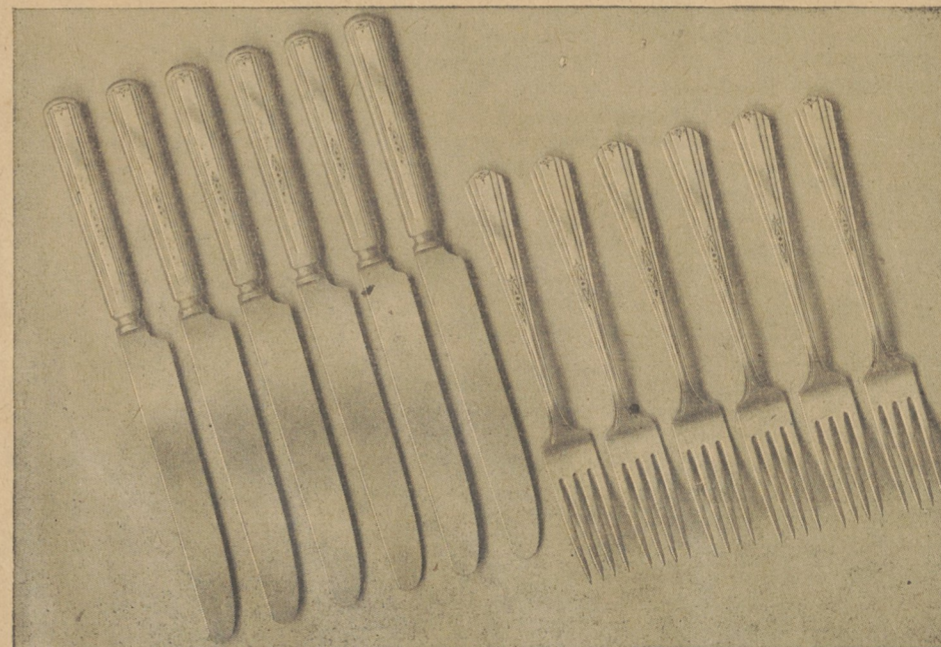
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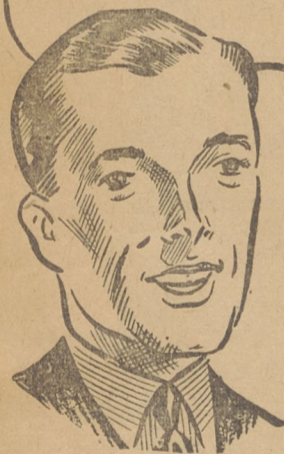
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