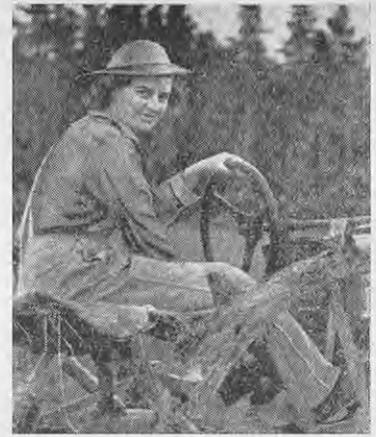




Solving The Farm Labour Problem



Greater prominence is now given to the development of the Women's Land Service, an organization that in Great Britain with 60,000 women farm workers has materially helped the farm labour problem and rendered an invaluable service to the nation. With an enthusiasm equal to their British cousins the girls of the New Zealand Women's Land Service are now ready to do their part in solving New Zealand's farm labour problem.

THE Women's Land Service presents a sound and constructive programme that has a two-fold object: a drive on an ambitious scale to recruit as many girls as possible that are considered suitable for farm work; a well-organised effort to enlist both the sympathy and help of farm owners who have not yet seriously considered the engagement of a land girl (or girls) as a solution of the ever-pressing labour problem. To those so placed, some rather convincing evidence is being offered that a very real opportunity does exist for meeting the emergency that has arisen.

British Women

Before dealing with the position in New Zealand, there is the pattern created by the Women's Land Army in Great Britain to offer as a shining example of achievement. During the last war a similar body was formed and developed. In the greater crisis created by the earlier days of the present conflict it was not difficult to pick up the threads of the old organisation. Many thousands of willing recruits came forward to relieve male farm workers for active service and, in a matter of a few weeks, the new army was operating extensively throughout the country.

At the present time there are approximately 60,000 women farm workers. Most of them commenced with no knowledge whatsoever of crops, stock, seasons, and other matters of farm routine. Many came from the more sequestered walks of life where people are inclined to be

intolerant of the least suggestion of inconvenience or discomfort. Today it would be difficult indeed to separate one British land girl from another in respect to social standing or anything else. No one wants to, and no one tries to. They are intensely keen on their work, and justifiably proud of the record they have established.

Farmers' Appreciation

It is very largely through the Land Army's energy and enterprise that Britain's farm production has reached the highest level in history. British farmers generally are well aware of this, and have nothing but the highest praise for what the girls have accomplished.

It was not always thus. At the outset there were several deep-rooted

objections to be overcome. The average British farmer is strong on matters of custom and precedent. He did not like the idea of female labour and did not hesitate to say so. Nowadays he shows an abiding respect for the woman farm worker, and a keen appreciation of her efforts; and in divers ways there is evidence of a purposeful harmony between the Land Army and the entire farming community.

New Zealand's Effort

The day has arrived when the New Zealand Women's Land Service offers the friendly challenge that what has been undertaken on the other side of the world can be achieved just as successfully in this Dominion. There are reasonable grounds for that challenge. Without considering the position of girls born and bred on farms, who cheerfully and capably perform men's work as a matter of daily routine, it may be said that deep down in most New Zealand women there is something of the pioneer spirit, combined with a natural love of the open. All, of course, are not physically equipped, or otherwise adapted for farm work, but a large number are well suited in most respects that count.

In New Zealand the Service has gone far beyond the stage of mere experiment. At the present time approximately 800 girls are employed on various New Zealand farms, covering virtually every branch of farm work. A salient point is that, in practically every instance, a man has been released for the Armed Forces. The records of these womenfolk make pleasant reading indeed, and the num-

