The Queenstown News

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Friday, January 1, 1954

Do We Want Socialized Agriculture?

It seems clear that some of the attacks made on Secretary of Agriculture Benson have been malicious and are designed to deliberately misstate his position. It has been intimated that he Secretary really wants to stop all or practically all government assistance to agriculture and let it sink. Actually, Mr. Benson is scrupulously administerng the price support law, which carries thru 1954, and has said again and again that, wahtever, farm program may come in the future, it is vital that the government be responsible for prevening agricultural distress.

Particularly angry attack have been made because of Mr. Benson's opposition to direct price supports on livestock. This may have beclouded the fact that a great many livestock producers, and responsible farm organizations as well, support Mr. Benson's position in this case. The American Farm Bureau Federation has said: "Direct price support would unquestionably lead to government agriculture. Such price supports would destroy the nation's efficient system for the production, processing and distribution of meat which is the envy and marvel of the world.

"Direct price supports applied to hogs in World War II resulted in dismal failure. The evidence is clear that markets were completely disrupted . . ."

When government pays the bill, government will and must make the rules and do the bossing. What Secretary Benson wants is a free and independent agriculture—and a farm program that will make that possible.

Horsepower on the Farm

The National Grange Monthly recently ran an article in which it discussed some of the tremendous changes that have taken place on the farm in a span of years.

In 1920, it said, each farm worker had about 5.0 horse power at his command. In 1950 he had 33 horsepower and he has more today. Agriculture has become the largest user of power in the country. To quote the magazine directly, "The American farmer can afford a tractor to cultivate his land, machines to do various kinds of work, a truck to haul his produce to market, and an automobile for the family. He can send his son to high school and college, and have other advantages that tillers of the soil never before have known anywhere."

We all know how the machine utterly transformed manufacturing industry. The machine's transformation of the arts of agriculture is no less thorough. And just as the machines that industry uses today are infinitely superior to those of the past, modern farm machines are so much better than their predecessors as to almost defy comparison. And their capabilities are not confined to making possible greater and more efficient production of food and fiber at a lower cost. The machine is the farmer's most effective ally in improving and conserving irreplaceable soil.

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