

FORCES OF DIFFUSION.

It might be said that four forces have accounted for the diffusion or dispersion of population in the life of this land. First came that centrifugal force which gathered up persons and groups in the Old World and spewed them across the ocean in search of new freedoms. Then came that same force to hurl persons and families from the seaboard across the land to the Pacific until the frontier vanished. Then came a centripetal force to gether up persons and families and throw them toward a common center, thereby creating the vast cities of the land. Now comes a fourth force to disperse people from cities to rural areas and from state to state. The net result is some states gained substantially in population from 1930 to 1940, some gained slightly, some stood still, and some lost. This in turn effects the congressional representation of the states. Keeping the number of Congressman at 435 means that the number of persons per member of Congress will have increased in the last ten years. Eight states will gain in congressional membership in 1942 and 10 states will lose. Pennsylvania and Illinois which are the 2nd and 3rd largest states in the union will each lose one member. California the 4th largest state will gain 3. Significantly, Tennessee the home of TVA, Oregon the home of Grand Coulee Dam, New Mexico, Arizona and California, the homes of reclamation projects all gain in 1942. Thus does government contribute to dispersion of population.

WEEDS

Someone described a weed as an unwanted plant or as a plant out of place. Let that be a prelude to a recent statement by the Department of Agriculture that thirty species of weeds, most of which are of the perennial variety with creeping roots, are expanding in such an alarming rate as to constitute a menace to agriculture. In 1920 these particularly aggressive varieties of weeds occupied but one million acres. By 1940 this had increased to six million acres and the Department estimates that by 1946 it will embrace twelve million acres. This type of weed is said to reduce crops from 15 to 90 per cent and worst of all, they present a problem which is hard to meet even by first class farming. Oddly enough the Department accounts for this expansion of obnoxious weeds by ascribing it to the depression, to neglect, to droughts and to cheap stock feed. Could it be possible that faulty land or letting acres lie idle under the provisions of the Agricultural Adjustment Act may be in part responsible for the growing weed menace?

THE PIFFLE TREE

(Being a dissertation on beans)

The State of Michigan among other things produces peaches, petroleum, motor cars and beans. This good state has become suddenly alarmed over the news that good old Army beans may be adulterated or displaced by caviar, pate de foie gras and other succulent delicacies which are good eating but which may not be a substantial an article of diet to keep a soldier going on a 25-mile hike. Says the President of the Michigan Bean Shippers Association, "What's the big idea, we Michiganders who grow the finest beans in the world would like to know. American soldiers won the Revolution on beans, they licked Mexico and held San Jaun on beans, they fought at Gettysburg on beans, they broke through the Hindenburg Line on beans. Are the beans of today lacking in the calories, vitamins or whatever it was that in the past made them the great est fighting grub on earth?" All of which induces one to observe that that a chap out West who was caught by the Draft Act asked for deferred status on the ground that he was allergic to beans and prunes.

OUR FAR FLUNG AGRICULTURE

On June 30, 1940 the Department of Agriculture had 86,023 employees of which 11,533 were located in Washington and 74,490 were scattered over the 48 states and territories of the nation. Of this number 2,093 are reported as coming from Illinois and 454 of this number are actually situated in the District of Columbia. In point of size the Forestry Service is the largest bureau in the Department and carries 20,076. Next comes the Soil Conservation Service with 17,219 followed by the Farm Security Administration with 16,009. This is a far cry from the day when Abraham Lincoln signed the bill in 1862 which created a bureau of Agriculture.