

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT.
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BI FOR MOTHER EARTH.

As we look back upon certain amazing discoveries or improvements that have come out of the war, we quite naturally think of sulfa drugs, penicillin, improved vitamins, radar, long range-bombers and similar items. If we reflect for a moment on these, we are confronted by the singular fact that these major discoveries are concerned either with conserving life or destroying life. Miracle drugs like the sulfa compounds and penicillin have in fact saved many lives. Radar has made it possible to locate with uncanny accuracy some enemy target so that long range bombers may do their destructive work. And, of course, we think naturally of the atom bomb in the field of wholesale destruction. The vitamins, which have become such a commonplace thing in our daily living are devoted to building energy, improving eyes, repelling scurvy and even saving the hair. In our researches for miracle drugs to conserve life and build energy, we've sort of forgotten that one of the real problems ahead is to devise improved vitamins for Mother Earth.

EARTH HUNGER.

Perhaps it has never occurred to most of us that land, like people, becomes run down, it's fertile energy is depleted and after a time, it cannot properly do it's work. The difficulty is that while people may cry out and express themselves in a loud way when that tired feeling comes on, the land has only a mute way of making it's malady known to mankind. It does so in the form of diminished yields and lowered production. Like a tired, weary, aged old man, the land finally produces less and less and in the very madness of modern life, we haven't paid too much attention. But the cold hard statistics will not let us forget that gradually Mother Earth is becoming a bit fatigued and needs an improved kind of Bi.

SOME STARTLING FACTS.

Over in Indiana, is a small group of 30 farmers who for about five years have been conducting what is known as the Five-Acre Corn Contest. In the last four years, all 30 of them have averaged over 150 bushels of corn per acre. One averaged 190 bushels per acre for four years. Now as against that amazing record, let's look at the other side of the picture. Each year we grow about 100,000,000 acres of corn. About 33,000,000 acres or about one third of the entire acreage - yields an average of about 12 to 20 bushels of corn. At \$1 per bushel, a farmer with such a yield scarcely gets his cost of production back. It's an interesting testimony to tired, hungry land that can't shout out and tell what's wrong.

ANOTHER ASPECT.

But hungry, weary soil presents still another problem. What does a tired deficient soil do to the crop. What does it do to the nutritional value of crops grown on such soils. How often one hears a person say that vegetables do not taste like they used to; or that beef does not have the same flavor that it had in the good old days; or that somehow, items in the modern diet don't have the same nourishment value as they once did. There is more truth than poetry in those statements. It has been proven repeatedly that when milk cows are placed on a diet that is deficient in vitamin A it develops a high degree of sterility in such cows.

CONCLUSION.

Well, all this is by way of preliminary to the statement that the question of tired, hungry soils is going to have more and more attention. Several bills are already pending in Congress to deal with a national fertilizer policy under which it is hoped that far better fertilizer than we now have, and more fertilizer at lower prices will become available for hungry soils. It is hoped that a huge demonstration project for every section of the country can be developed to show conclusively what the right kind of fertilizers in the right quantities can do for weary soils. It looks as if, at long last, we're getting around to a little Bi for Mother Earth.