

Don't Hoard Land

* FOOD PRODUCTION and Ration Week was recently featured in the press and over the radio. President Roosevelt has suggested the importance of the United States doing its part in feeding and freeing from starvation a large part of the world after the war, and so far as possible prior to the war's end. The late Arthur Brisbane frequently wrote that the state of Texas could feed the entire United States, with ample surplus left over. Could we not feed the world if necessary?

As a consequence of this program of food sharing, hoarding has come to be regarded as a crime, abhorrent to every attribute of justice and inimical to the general welfare, with the governments of all countries trying desperately to prevent it.

Now it is a fundamental and axiomatic truth that all material provision necessary to sustain life comes from the earth. But how does the statement just made about hoarding apply here? Few seem to question the landowner's right to a complete hoarding of his basically necessary possession, even though such hoarding might mean the depriving of thousands of food or space to live in. Is it not time to take the searchlight of publicity off the beggarly hoarder of fifty pounds of sugar, and turn it on to the hoarder of thousands or tens of thousands of acres of land?

The Republic of Mexico is reported to have issued recently a decree to the effect that under the agrarian laws of that country any land held idle and withdrawn from use shall be forfeited by the

owner. Is not this a measure to prevent hoarding at the source? Would not the resumption of public title to idle and unused land, without compensation to the owner, be the most practical anti-hoarding measure possible to adopt? Should not this effective method of increasing production and decreasing or even abolishing involuntary unemployment be incorporated in the peace treaties at the close of war, as the first necessary essential to an enduring peace?

—GEORGE DANA LINN