

## Idle Acres—Idle Men

\* An editorial in the Cobb County Times (Ga.) tells of the gracious act of Mr. James L. Sibley, Sr. in offering his 1,000 acre plantation, now idle, to the government for food production at a rental of \$1 a year. The editorial states further that there are millions of such acres owned by banks, insurance companies and individuals which might be acquired by the government at a dollar a year per farm, if a plan could be worked out to produce food from these idle acres.

All honor to Mr. Sibley for what appears to be a generous offer, but is it of any real value to the nation? Where is the labor and the equipment necessary to cultivate those idle acres to come from? There is now a shortage of farm labor everywhere as well as a shortage of farm machinery, and that condition will obtain for the duration of the war. An offer of thousands of idle acres at \$1 a year per farm, if made ten or twelve years ago, say in the early 'thirties, would have greatly increased our production of wealth, thereby providing much employment, if the lease was for an extended period. At the moment the offer would appear to be valueless.

The question is, why were those idle acres not available for food production in peace times? They furnish no revenue to the owners; one can only surmise that the owners hoped to reap an unjustified profit, which is known as "unearned increment," produced by the people as a whole and belonging morally to those who produced it. When plans are being shaped for our post-war economy that is something that must have the serious consideration of the people of every community, and their elected government.

A democratic civilization cannot exist for long with millions of idle acres on the one hand and

millions of idle men on the other. Such a situation is the height of absurdity, an anachronism which should not be tolerated by people who call themselves intelligent.

—JOHN ANDERSON