

Farmers' Future?

By Henry F. Badgley

Much ado is made by some writers about the large number of tenant farmers in Japan. I heard someone mention it on the radio, and Frank Kelly writing for the Herald-Tribune states that 80% are tenants. Kelly also states that more than 47% of the 5½ million households have less than 1.3 acres.

What's so terrible about all this? When one compares these figures with the farmers of this great and glorious U.S.A., for the time we have been a country compared with the time Japan has been a country, it seems to me it leaves much to be desired, so far as the farmers in this country are concerned.

According to the Bureau of Census, 1940, taken from The Economic Almanac gotten out by the Conference Board, the number of farms in U.S. is 6,097,000 and the number of acres is 1,061,000,000. This would make the average for each farm 174 acres. Quite a farm! But when one starts to analyse it, every farm isn't quite 174 acres.

Farms over 100 acres comprise 24% of the number, but when it comes to acreage, this 24% controls or owns 87% of the land. That leaves 13% of the land for about 75% of the farmers. And when you figure that out it means that three-fourths of the farmers have on an average a farm of just a little over 3 acres. So, the great opportunity of 75% of the farmers of this country is just a little more than twice what it is in Japan.

When it comes to tenant farmers in the U.S.A., from the same source, I find in 1940 nearly 39% of the farms were operated by tenants. In 1930 over 42% of the farms were operated by tenants. The number of tenants in-

creased every 10-year period from 1880 to and including 1930. Why it dropped in 1940 I do not know. It will be interesting to see how it is in 1950. When we are as old a country as Japan, if the percentage of tenants keeps increasing, it is quite likely we too will be up to 80%, the same as they are.

Referring to letter from Doris E. Hulse in November issue—I don't know that equal opportunity to use of land would eliminate war, but I think it would pretty near do so. If all people really understood, it seems to me it would be impossible to get armies together. Men would satisfy their desires with least effort and it would be easier to get satisfactions by working on land than that it would by being in armies and fighting. So, if you couldn't get an army together, how could you have war?
Montclair, N. J.