

Henry Ford, Dreamer and Worker

Extracts from Review of Reviews JUDSON C. WELLIVER

Table of Contents

1. When farmers work 20 days a year.
2. Fertilizers in Ford's industrial revolution.
3. Ford to teach railroad efficiency.
4. A prediction—coal burned underground.
5. Ford's school for boys. His hospital.
6. Solution of gasoline shortage.
7. "The most needed public reform."

1. On my place we farm 5000 acres with about 20 days of real work a year. That's the way all farming will be done some day. Farmers will put in the rest of their time at useful and necessary tasks. They will make collars and shirts; build better homes, more schoolhouses, read and write books, ride in motor cars, and see the world, and learn how to run it right. The world has begun to tire of the old wasteful way of production and consumption. The changes are going to bring people a chance to live, to develop their real possibilities, to create a greater civilization. England produced less than a quarter of annual food requirements before the war. In its last year they produced, it has been said, three quarters of their food.

"One of the London papers the other day told of a synthetic milk, with the soy bean as its basis, as good as real milk, and healthier. All the domestic animals on farms will be swept out of existence before long. The horses eat their heads off. Meat? Go to Battle Creek and they'll feed you a beefsteak that will satisfy you that never saw a cow. The proper elements, properly proportioned, will make the same food, if produced scientifically, as if half the world had drudged to get them."

2. Recently Mr. Ford made a definite offer to the Government for the unfinished but immense water-power and nitrate plant at Muscle Shoals, Alabama. The motor car made the farmer ready for the tractor (Mr. Ford has spent \$40,000,000 getting ready to sell a million tractors a year). But if domestic animals were too rapidly done

away with, the problem of fertilization would presently become acute. Here Muscle Shoals and nitrates become the obvious next step in the Ford industrial revolution. If Mr. Ford and Mr. Edison can produce nitrates in quantities at much reduced prices, as they confidently expect, there is little doubt that their attention will turn to getting commercial potash from the deposits in various parts of the country, and from the Pacific Ocean kelp. The Germans' monopoly of potash has caused world-wide search for other supplies.

3. Over a year ago Mr. Ford bought the Detroit, Toledo and Ironton Railroad, primarily to get better terminals for his plant. But railroad transportation is included in his program of industrial advance. He is experimenting, feeling his way, and is learning. "The pioneers built railroads, not to provide transportation, but to make money out of promotion and construction. Some railroads were built to sell; little more than blackmailing projects. There was over-capitalization, gambling and manipulating of securities; an era of huge consolidations for the sake of increasing the volume of securities, rather than to reduce costs and better service. This brought the bankers to the top in railroad control. Railroad control was transferred to downtown New York, instead of being conducted from proper operating headquarters where the business was going on. Too little real transportation management. The operation of the roads is left to executives whose real concern is to hold their jobs at high salaries. I think as good a thing as could happen to the railroads would be for somebody to take a single system and run it

right.” It is inferred that this is what Mr. Ford intends to do with his railroad.

“A banking group which controls railroads also dominates concerns that build cars and locomotives. It doesn’t make any difference whether the cars and locomotives are the best; they are the ones the railroads must buy. The bankers control the iron and steel industries and want to sell as much as possible. So the railroads buy the type of cars they are now using, which are about as bad as possible. The average freight car weighs three times as much—contains three times as much steel as it ought. That means an almost unbelievable waste. You ought to see the work we are doing in studying locomotive construction and car building. We have taken a lot of locomotives to pieces to find out how they are built, what they will do and what they won’t do, what they ought to do and how to make them do it”.

Mr. Ford has built one steam locomotive—a pigmy beside the ordinary American locomotive. It reminds one of the tiny locomotives on British railroads, behind which one may ride from London to Plymouth, 220 miles, without a stop, faster than any American train makes a run of similar length. “A motor-cycle cop on a machine perhaps one-tenth as heavy as an automobile comes up from behind and arrests you for speeding. We’ll find out how to do it with light construction on the railroads”.

4. “Electricity is the coming power. There is no more sense in digging coal as we now do, than in mining the soil by our rudimentary farming methods. I predict that in a time not far off, we will not think of using coal for fuel. Hundreds of things, from gas to dyes, are made from coal, and the time will come when we won’t even dig it out of the ground; we will burn it under ground, extract its elements, and bring them to the surface”.

5. Of all Mr. Ford’s enterprises, he is most interested in his school for boys—his own idea. Some 500 boys have scholarships—boys who though of school age must support themselves.

They divide time between books, lectures and real work in the factory. Every boy is paid more than he could get anywhere else. Mr. Ford is training men for the “designing board”—men who can see the thing before it is made.

Next to the school in his affections stands the \$5,000,000 Ford hospital, built after an exhaustive study of the best hospitals, with plenty of Ford ideas included. The Mayo Brothers pronounce it “the best hospital”.

6. Mr. Ford was asked, “But when you have motorized the world—and the petroleum runs out?” “An acre of potatoes will produce alcohol to plow it with tractors for 100 years. Before the war in Germany they produced a gallon of potato alcohol for nine cents. That’s easy. Better fuel than gasoline, too”.

7. “Supreme court judges should be paid as much as the President. Make them so independent that you can get the best men, and then get them to give the best in them. That’s the most needed public reform”.

Mr. Ford, last winter, in a few weeks, when the country was filled with rumors that he was being squeezed and might put out a \$75,000,000 bond issue, fooled the prophets by raising \$87,000,000 from his own resources, without borrowing a cent.

About 80,000 people are directly in Ford employ, aside from agents and garage owners. There are 35 plants about the country, 22 of which make some parts, set up cars and distribute. Mr. Ford owns his own iron and coal mines, the coal shipped over his own railroad; the ore in chartered boats that will presently be Ford-owned. Mr. Ford has a \$5,000,000 tractor plant in Cork, Ireland; at Manchester, England 75 per cent. of the parts of cars are made. There are three assembling plants in Europe; two in South America. Ford is everywhere.

1. According to the passage, how many acres does the speaker farm, and how many days of real work per year does it require?
 - A) 1000 acres / 100 days
 - B) 5000 acres / 20 days
 - C) 2000 acres / 50 days
 - D) 10,000 acres / 10 days
2. What does the passage suggest will happen to domestic animals on farms in the future?
 - A) They will be bred in larger numbers for meat production
 - B) They will be replaced by synthetic alternatives and tractors
 - C) They will remain essential for fertilization
 - D) They will only be used for transportation
3. Why did Mr. Ford purchase the Detroit, Toledo and Ironton Railroad?
 - A) To expand passenger services across the country
 - B) Primarily to get better terminals for his plant
 - C) To compete with other railroads in freight
 - D) To promote tourism in the Midwest
4. According to the passage, what is one major criticism of the current railroad system?
 - A) Too much emphasis on efficiency
 - B) Over-capitalization and control by bankers
 - C) Lack of government regulation
 - D) Excessive competition among companies
5. What does Mr. Ford predict about the future use of coal?
 - A) It will be mined more efficiently
 - B) It will be burned underground to extract elements
 - C) It will replace electricity as the main power source
 - D) It will be used only for heating homes
6. What is Mr. Ford most interested in among his enterprises?
 - A) His tractor plant in Ireland
 - B) His school for boys
 - C) His hospital project
 - D) His railroad operations
7. How does the passage describe the Ford hospital?
 - A) Built with input from the Mayo Brothers
 - B) A \$5,000,000 facility with Ford ideas included
 - C) The only hospital in the region
 - D) Focused mainly on factory workers
8. What solution does Mr. Ford propose for fuel when petroleum runs out?
 - A) Synthetic gasoline from coal
 - B) Alcohol produced from potatoes
 - C) Nuclear power
 - D) Wind energy
9. What reform does Mr. Ford suggest regarding Supreme Court judges?
 - A) They should be elected by the public
 - B) They should be paid as much as the President
 - C) Their terms should be limited
 - D) They should retire at age 70
10. How did Mr. Ford raise \$87,000,000 recently, according to the passage?
 - A) By issuing a bond issue
 - B) From his own resources without borrowing
 - C) Through government loans
 - D) By selling stock in his company

Key

1. B 2. C 3. A 4. D 5. C 6. B 7. A 8. D 9. C 10. B