

NOT TO BE PUBLISHED IN ANY WAY OR BROADCAST BEFORE 4 p.m. ON  
SATURDAY, 7th MARCH, 1942

THE DUKE OF NORFOLK AT READING, 7th MARCH, 1942

Speaking at Reading today (Saturday), the Duke of Norfolk, Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, told Berkshire farmers and farm workers that he had come to repeat an urgent message of warning rather than to make a speech.

"It is only a week," the Duke said, "since the Minister of Agriculture told us that we were facing one of the gravest situations of the war. He told us, too, that the harvest of 1942 might be a critical factor in the history not only of this country but of the whole world."

PRICES

The Duke said that the new farm prices fulfilled the Government's pledge to farmers both in the letter and in the spirit. It had been said that the prices did not allow for increased profits for many farmers. That was not the intention. The purpose of the revision was to get a level of prices that would enable the great majority of farmers to produce the extra food that the nation needed and to make a living for themselves. That and no more.

"This is not the time," the Duke continued, "to press for more than strict justice." Even if the prices meant ruin, that would be better than to have an angry people say that the farmers knew how to look after themselves in the war and could very well look after themselves during the peace. Their claim for the future, as with all of us, rested on their services to the community, and to-day they were being asked to perform a greater service than ever before.

INCREASED PRODUCTION

More of everything would be needed, the Duke said. The Government would give farmers all the machinery and supplies and all the financial assistance they could, so that the farmers could produce the extra 5 or 10 per cent that was so desperately needed. Every failure by a farmer would cost the lives of some of our bravest and best young men.

COUNTY WAR AGRICULTURAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

The Duke urged all farmers not to hesitate to make full use of their County Committees. The Committees were very efficient. They were there to help, and they had the whole country behind them. He took the opportunity of paying his tribute to the expert men who made up those Committees. They worked hard and long, and gave of their best.

FARM WORKERS

The workers, the Duke said, deserved the better pay which they had recently received. They were key men, and the value of their work in the national cause could not be exaggerated. Although they were reserved from the Army they were on active service, and it was up to them to work all the hours of daylight.

Many farmworkers would have to pay income tax for the first time, but the Duke wished to dispel the mistaken notion that practically all their overtime earnings would be swallowed up by income tax.

#### MILK

"Next winter," the Duke said, "the life of every child in this Island is going to depend on the dairy farmers." The milk yield must be raised by every possible means. Farmers had not only to increase the number of down-calving heifers, but to increase the average yield per cow. The Duke thought that many farmers were not getting the output they should from their herds. More milk could be produced from the same quantity of feeding stuffs if cows were fed according to modern knowledge of their requirements.

Feeding stuffs must not be wastefully used. If a cow was diseased or unthrifty it must be culled. Better bulls should be used and more heifer calves reared.

#### GRASS

Grass, the Duke said, was one of the most important crops in this country. It had to provide grazing, hay and silage. Temporary leys were specially valuable, and would produce at least two to three times the amount of food that could be got from the average permanent pasture.

#### WOMEN'S LAND ARMY

In paying a tribute to the work of the Women's Land Army the Duke advised farmers who wanted land girls to state their requirements now. Although many recruits were coming along the demand could not always be met in a day or even in a week.

#### GERMAN FARMERS

The Duke asked farmers to think for a moment of their opposite numbers in Germany. They had even greater difficulties, but probably they were working as they had never worked before. We were blockading Germany and she was straining every nerve to blockade us. It was a straight fight between British farmers and German farmers. "And," said the Duke, "I'm putting my money on you."

In conclusion, the Duke again stressed the gravity of the times and the responsibility of farmers. "To-day," he said, "the men of this country - your own sons - are fighting in every corner of the world. They are counting on you to see that their families are looked after. They are depending on you just as much as on the Navy and the Merchant Marine and the Air Force to keep up the nation's food supplies. I know that you will not let them down."