Mr. Prestbo states that "federal farm planners" say that we need only 500,000 farmers to produce all of the food and fiber for our people. I wonder if it occured to him that the 2½ million farmers that are now to be forced off of the land may include the most efficient and the hardest working farmers? That the 500,000 that will be left may be those with much capital but no desire or incentive to produce farm products?

YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING FARMS

The average age of the American farmer is now 59 years. There has been no incentive for young people to start farming for almost 20 years. We must have young people enter farming as a profession. We must see that there is sufficient profit incentive in farming so that the American farmer can live on the same standard of living as his city cousin.

We must make every effort to convince government officials that the producers of agricultural products are not receiving a fair share of the consumer's dollar. The farmer's share of the food dollar was 46 cents in 1947, and is estimated to drop to 32 cents in 1967. Farm prices are lower today than they were 20 years ago, yet production costs have increased 35 per cent. Food is a bargain, only 17.6 cents of each dollar of personal income, after taxes, goes for food, compared to 25.7 cents 20 years ago.

Just because the American farm has not become unionized does not mean that it should be trampled out of existence. We must get the food chains and the meat packers out of the feed lots, as they are not interested in farm profits, but only in controlling prices.

Very truly yours,

DON F. KIRCHNER,
President and Cashier, Peoples Trust & Savings Bank, Riverside, Iowa.

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THE PARADOX OF LOW FARM PRICES

(By Don F. Kirchner)

(*Don F. Kirchner, president and cashier of the Peoples Trust and Savings Bank, Riverside, Iowa, is a member of the Agriculture-Rural America Committee of the Independent Bankers Association of America. He was raised in a small Iowa farm community, was Graduated from Hamilton College at Mason City, Iowa, and attended the State University of Iowa. He entered banking in 1951 as cashier of Peoples Trust and Savings Bank at Riverside. He has concerned himself for many years with the problems of the farmer and the rural community.*)

The performance of American agriculture has been outstanding. It has been far greater than that of any other major industry and far exceeds that of agriculture in most other countries.

The American farmer deserves the praise of all for his tremendous progress and his efficiency. Instead he is often blamed for high food prices and criticized for the federal aid given him in an effort to counteract the side effects of his unique ability to produce so much.

Farmers seldom have been rewarded adequately in proportion to their contribution to the rest of the people in this country. The advance in food prices has been very small in a time of high over-all price increases. Thus, farmers have made a great contribution in combating inflation.

They have provided people to man our industries, and the things they buy support millions of people in industry. Their food products aid our foreign policy and keep millions alive in the under-developed countries of the world. Peoples around the world look to American agriculture to learn how to speed up development of their own food supplies.

STARVATION THREATENS

Food is so plentiful and so cheap in relation to income that few in the United States really worry about hunger. But this is one of the few places on earth where abundance is a fact. Somewhere between one-half and two-thirds of all the people in the world go to bed hungry every night.