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# FARM POLICIES *under the* NEW DEAL

*What are the causes of the farmer's plight?*

*To what extent is the AAA responsible for higher prices?*

*Has the AAA aided or injured the farmer?*

*Should production control be maintained permanently?*

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NO. 16 1938

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# Farm Policies under the New Deal*

ALTHOUGH the Agricultural Adjustment Act of May 12, 1933, was a milestone for American agriculture, it was not a turning point. The needs to which the President and Congress responded were not born wholly of the 1929 depression; the adjustment measures were not drawn up overnight by the New Deal. The difficulties which the Act sought to overcome had been felt for at least a decade —many of them for a far longer period—and the remedies which it advanced had been in process of emerging for a like number of years.

## *Looking to the Government*

The agrarian movement of the 1920's, the farm policies which it formed and the programs which it sponsored, all had counterparts in previous American history. Rural America had for generations looked upon use of the powers of government as a normal way of promoting agricultural welfare and defending agricultural interests. Much of the farm land of the West had been obtained directly from the government under the Homestead Acts. The period between the Civil War and the World War saw the creation of a far-flung system of institutions to train the oncoming farm generations and to discover and disseminate the type of farm practices likely to increase agricultural income. The Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, and the Vocational Agricultural teachers, the State Experiment Stations, and the Agricultural Extension Services to counsel with farmers, farm women and farm young people were all in operation before 1920. Several times during the same period, govern-

* The sections of this pamphlet appraising the AAA are based on "Three Years of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration," published by the Brookings Institution. See page 20 for details.

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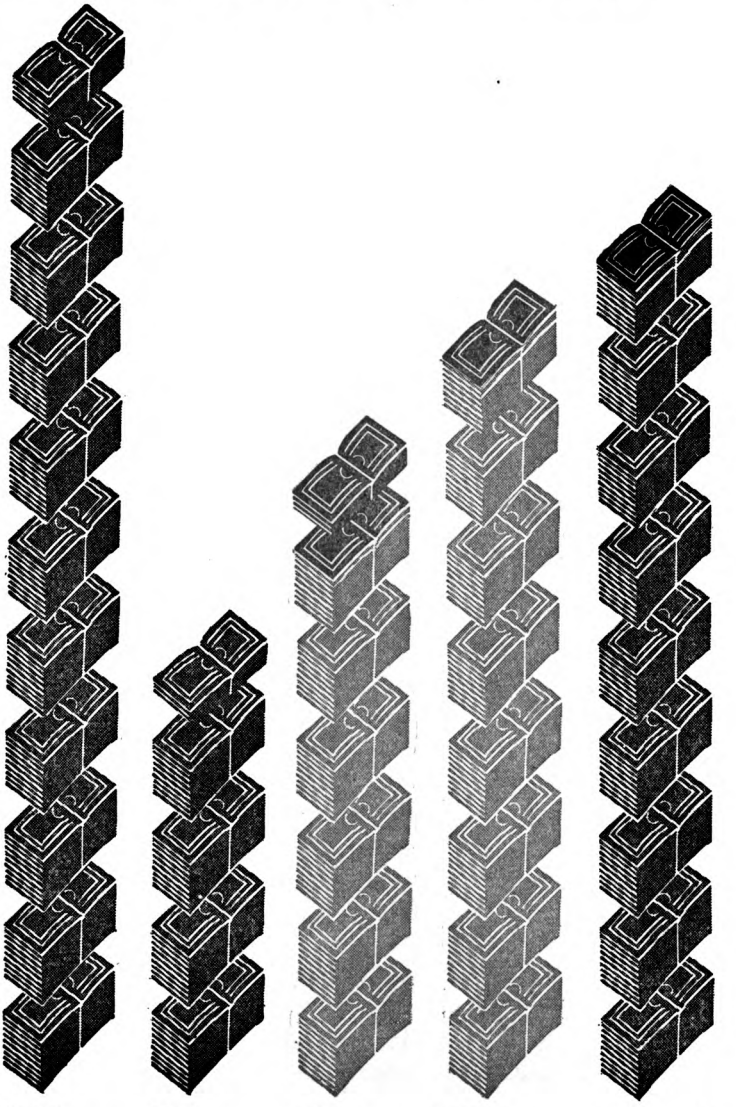
# CASH INCOME OF FARMERS



1929 1932 1934 1936 1937 (EST.)

Each single note represents 100 million dollars
Black notes represent government payments

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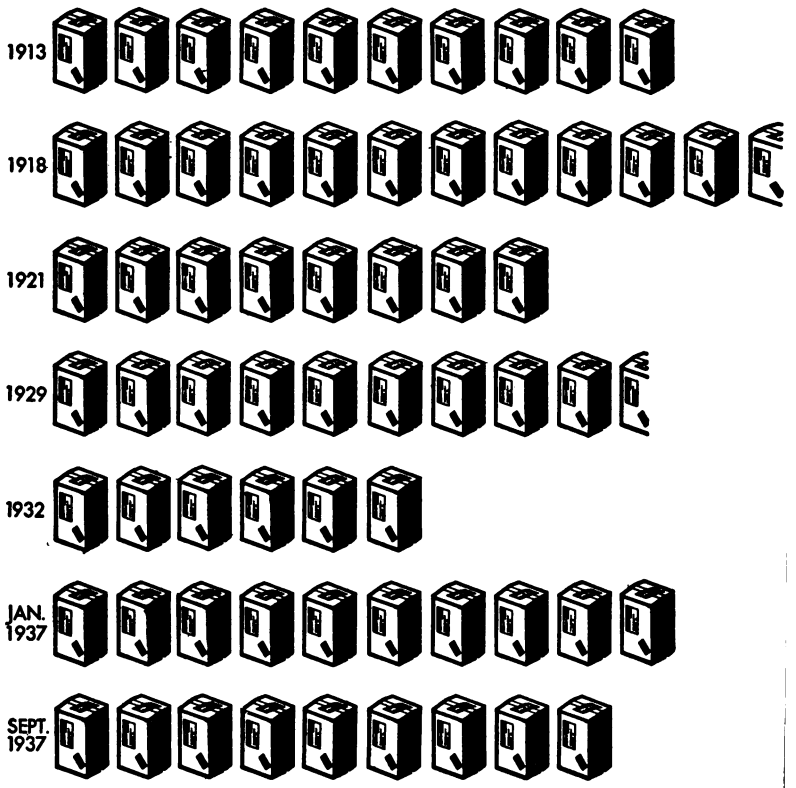
farmers' associations; among them the Farm Bureau Federation, the Farmers' Union, the Farm Holiday Association, and the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union. These have served

## BUYING POWER OF FARM PRODUCTS




to dramatize the farm problem to the nation, as well as to mobilize the forces of agriculture for legislative pressure.

The New Deal's attack on the farm problem, with a view to giving agriculture a fair share of the national income, took place against the background of the changes just described.



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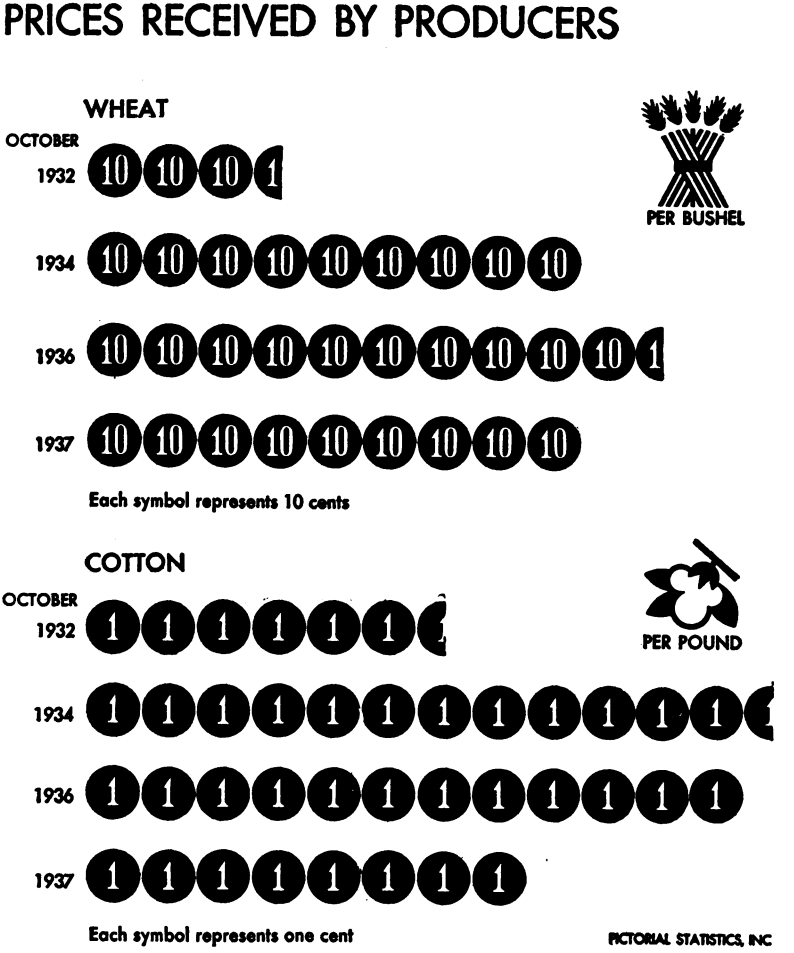
The granting of both the loan and price adjustment payment was therefore made dependent on the farmers agreeing to participate in the 1938 farm program; and a joint resolution




of both Houses announced that new farm legislation should be on the immediate agenda of reassembled Congress.

The special session which was held in November and December, 1937, however, failed to produce new farm legis-



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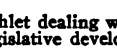




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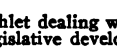




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