

More Production

We are glad to see, according to Manitoba Government figures, that our farmers have steadily in mind an increase in farm production. More land was summer-fallowed and plowed during 1916 than in the preceding year. The figures in acres, for breaking, summer-fallow and fall plowing in the two years are as follows:—

	Breaking	Summer Fallow	Fall Plowing
1915.....	193,144	1,094,514	1,509,002
1916.....	90,113	1,235,052	1,846,661

The total figures for 1915 are 2,795,630 acres, and for 1916, 3,171,826 acres.

An important matter, coming within the province of the Department of Agriculture, is the labor problem. We learn that there will be no more recruiting at Minto, N.B., and recruiting officers seeking men for overseas service will give the place a wide berth. The reason for the new order of things is an order of the Ottawa military authorities in compliance with a request from the director of national service.

Minto is the centre of the soft coal mining district of New Brunswick and is composed almost entirely of the miners and their families. The number of men who have enlisted from the district has left the operators seriously handicapped and great difficulty has been found in filling their places. As the coal shortage is becoming a serious problem, the owners decided that the case was a legitimate one to lay before the national service authorities and they requested an investigation.

As a result of the inquiry the order has been issued and in future a capable coal miner will have small chance of getting into khaki.

There is a similar situation at Glace Bay, N.S., where recruiting has been stopped for several months. After the Highland Brigade had recruited an entire battalion in Cape Breton, it was found that withdrawing more skillful miners would be a serious handicap to the production of the much needed coal and it was then decided that the miner was serving his country to better advantage in the pit than he could in the trenches.

Owing to the shortage at Minto, various classes of labor have been tried out, including interned Germans and Austrians, but with little satisfaction. The aliens, especially, formed a difficult problem owing to racial animosity, and there were several scrapes which nearly had a fatal ending. A large number of them also attempted to escape across country to the Maine border and several succeeded. After the last attempt the scheme was abandoned and the foreigners were sent back to internment camp.

We may look for practical results from recent registration in so far as the West is concerned. Here we raise the surest food supply for the Empire. With a little extra exertion we are in a position to supply Britain with every pound of flour required for normal consumption; and many other products of the farm. It is stated that farm help is becoming a serious problem. If registration means an aid to placing every man on the job where he can best serve his country, then surely all men will agree that it came none too soon. We trust the authorities at Ottawa will consult and co-operate with the governments of the Western provinces in plans that will assuredly properly man the farms of the West. Sure food supply for the Empire is just as necessary as soldiers or munitions in winning the war. This supply cannot be turned out in a month or even six months. It is dependent upon far-sightedness and thorough organization.