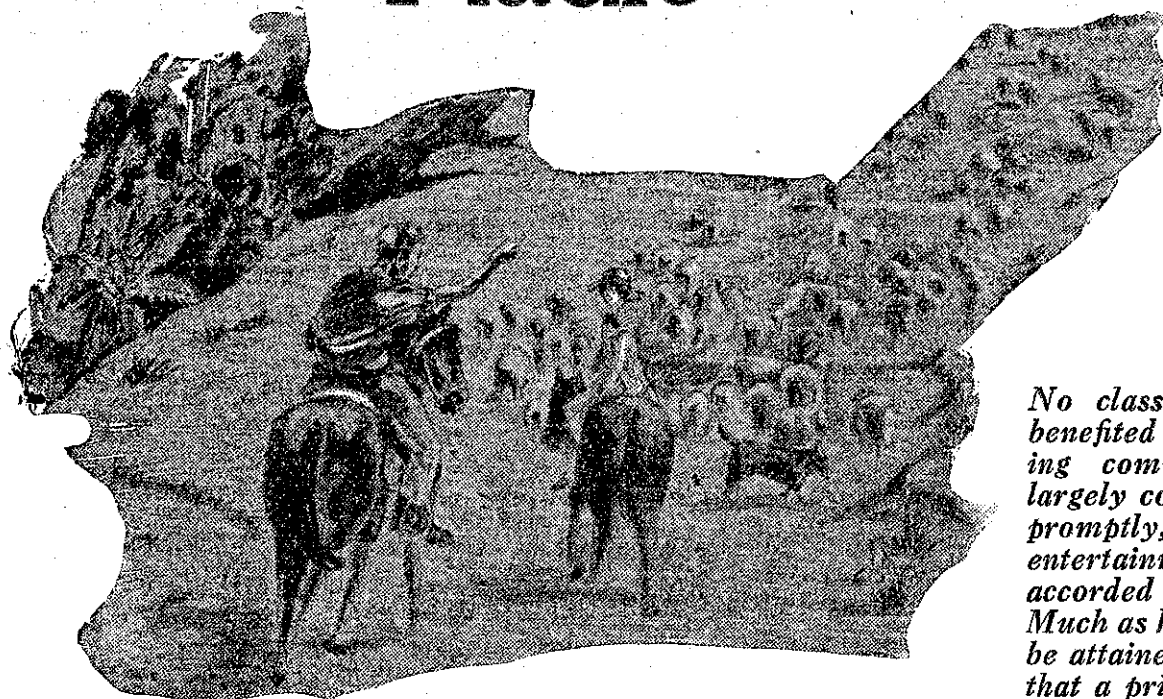


# What Radio *has* done for the Farmer



**T**HAT radio has materially helped in stemming the rural

drift to cities and in holding a bigger proportion of the population "down on the farm" is a major claim made by the authors in their vital work, "This Thing Called Broadcasting."

This is their reasoning. In 1900 the rural population represented 57.4 per cent. of the total. In 1910 the percentage was 54.2. By 1920 it was 48.6. Of the rural population 33.1 per cent. in 1910 were farmers and in 1920 only 26.3 per cent. But here's the point! Between 1900 and 1910 the proportion of rural to urban population declined 3.2 per cent., and in the next 10 years was 5.6 per cent. At that rate of acceleration the drop should have been 8 per cent. between 1920 and 1930. But it wasn't! Something checked it and that something, it is claimed, was radio, which has contributed so much to personal comfort and the increased allure of civilisation on the farm.

Already in 1925 General Harbord, then president of the Radio Corporation of America, spoke of radio as the farmer's friend in an address before the Advertising Club of New York. By ending the isolation of farm life radio will be the greatest factor of modern times in keeping young men on the farms, said he. Recalling the days when he was a boy on a Kansas farm, General Harbord recounted the hardships of farm life 40 years ago. "Yet it has not been the physical hardships," he said, "but the dullness of life, the utter monotony and the lack of recreation that have caused the farm boy or girl, as well as the paid farm labourer to desert the old farm and seek the city."

"Through radio the farmer now receives the advice of agricultural authorities. It is a friend in the time of the farmer's need. Be it insect plague, animal epidemics, threatening weather, or other adverse conditions, the radio brings the information necessary to meet the problem. With these utilitarian

benefits there comes a wealth of entertainment. The great men of the nation, the President himself, will speak in the farmer's home.

"The city listeners, tuning in on a station only to hear a voice reeling off the price of White Leghorn eggs, fancy cabbage, red onions and pork, where he had hoped to hear jazz, may not be much impressed with the value of market reports. But at that very (Concluded on page 2.)

*No class throughout New Zealand has benefited more from radio than the farming community. Isolation has been largely conquered, vital information given promptly, social gains extended by brighter entertainment and economic benefits accorded with a free and liberal hand.*

*Much as has been done, even more may yet be attained. It may be taken for granted that a prime purpose of the new Radio Board will be to expand the service available from radio over larger areas and so extend the benefit of radio to new rural communities. Particularly in these days of economic stress will that coming benefit be appreciated.*

*In the accompanying article, summarised from "This Thing Called Broadcasting," a vision is given of the benefits conferred upon American farmers by radio, and which in equal part may be expected by Dominion farmers in the future.*

