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## Mortgages, Machines and Other Problems of Self-Sufficient Farming - Part I

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## Free Land Is Necessary For A Green Revolution

By Louis F. Potter

[Editor's Note: Many a would-be homesteader has written to *The Green Revolution* about his concern over financial difficulties—the high cost of land near the city where he has a job; the high cost of credit if he has to borrow; the high prices for machines and equipment. As one said, "We want a homestead now, while the children are young. And we can't put away enough savings to cover all the early costs. What do you advise?"]

Will you read what Mr. Potter has to say here, and then send to the editor the answer you would make to this would-be homesteader's question?—Ed.]

Free land is nature's gift to all people. Every person therefore has a birthright of free possession of the land he occupies and uses for his livelihood.

### Rent of Land is Theft

However, when, as now, the public sanctions the practice of persons acquiring or possessing land beyond this equitable limit, land soon becomes the property of a few persons who hold more than they can personally use. This portion is withheld from others, and the multitudes are thus forced into landlessness and poverty. Nature's free gift of land to all has become subject to fees—price or rent for land. This constitutes publicly authorized or legal thievery of the birthright of land. Receipt of land cost or rent is a theft of the product of the people who work. It is the subjugation of the masses into

peonage.

### Plenty of Land for All

There is enough good land in all countries, even today, for each to possess his birthright of that land needed for his occupancy and legitimate livelihood. Areas of good land in all countries, in all ages, withheld from use by individual "owners," shows that there is a surplus of land. As a result, each person who works as an employee, on land or in industry or in commerce, is working his utmost in order to cover what is taken from him in land rents, land prices and in taxes on land. This enforced poverty extends also to the self-employed who can afford to purchase barely enough land for their livelihood.

### Voluntary Limiting of Land Holding

Some day people will recognize the thievery and tyranny of acquiring or holding land in excess of their equitable portion. They will reject it as they do all other publicly recognized thievery within their community. They will withdraw their sanction from it. They will voluntarily limit their holding of land to occupancy and personal use.

Unused or withheld land will then be automatically unowned and available, free. Every person will then have good land without charge and without being subject to regulation or coercion by political authority.

### Urge Freedom

In that case, neither govern-  
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## Animals On the Homestead

By Hal Porter

### Part II

By the time I got my goats I was well versed in the organic method of growing animals. I think the system would be much more effective if I could raise one-hundred per cent of their food on my homestead but to do that I would need about two more acres. About fifty per cent of their feed is the best I can do, even with renting a small piece of land from a neighbor. On the goats I ran into the same allopathic system of keeping them healthy with frequent doses of chemicals, antibiotics, etc. The neighbor who helped me get my first goat advised me to worm her right away. I ignored such advice. Recently, through the Mildred Hatch Free Library, I procured a copy of *The Herbal Handbook for Farm and Stable*. I found in reading this that if I give the goats garlic now and then they will have no worm trouble. One time they got loose bowels and following the advice of the book I gave them both rose and blackberry vines to munch on and cured the condition in 36 hours.

I learned a lot more than just how to feed my stock and flock in these few years. Every now and then I will read or hear someone speak about dumb animals. Or someone will pontificate that the main difference between animals and people is that people can think and use tools and that is what makes them a higher form of life and better than the brutes, who seem not as brutish as humans. Some of those who write such things are supposed to be scientists. I say "supposed to be" because if I understand the meaning of the term "scientist" these writers

and teachers are far from it. Yet when I maintain that animals can think and that all their actions are not governed by instinct, I get those pitying looks as though I had gone soft in the head.

### Animal Intelligence

I would like to have these believers in instinct and the superiority of humans here on my homestead a while to actually watch animals and communicate with them and maybe prove them wrong. I say "maybe" because it is very difficult to pry open a closed mind.

For instance, one authority said that animals can't build anything except of course dens dug in the ground and nests built by the birds, and that these are constructed wholly by inherited instinct. I wonder how he would explain the following?

I borrowed a billy goat to breed two of my nannies, and put him in a pen behind the barn. On the barn wall I had several racks holding scrap boards and planks, some of them ten feet long. A small roof for a shelter for Billy was nailed to the same wall and covered the racks and lumber and a small expanse of ground. Next to the wall on the ground I had placed several concrete blocks and four by fours and other planks on them. Billy apparently decided he wanted a floor to lay on or stand right close to the wall of the barn. The lumber was in his way, but he had horns, and I watched him work from a distance. He went to one end of the racked lumber, hooked a horn behind a timber and threw it to the ground; then he walked to the other end and repeated the process. He did this with each  
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## Mortgages, Machines and Other Problems of Self-Sufficient Farming

By John Seymour

### Part I

[Editor's Note: John Seymour is a writer and commentator on BBC in England (author of *Fat of the Land*, an account of his first homestead experiences). Below is the first of a series obtained from letters reporting on the Seymours' new homesteading adventure, on 70 acres they have bought at Fachongle, Isaf, Newport, Pembrokeshire, Wales.]

I have been reading *School of Living* journals for some time, and I was feeling something like a man who has come into a cinema half-way through the film and is puzzled by the story. Then I read your issue of *A Way Out* in which you described the origin and development of the *School of Living*. This was like a good, concise account of what the filmgoer has missed, whispered by the person sitting next to him. So now I feel much more familiar with the decentralist movement in the USA.



### What Is the Proper Way to Live?

Being about the only "self-supporting" crank about here, I often feel a little lost and depressed about it. Surely the whole world can't be out of step except me? Can it be that I perhaps am out of step? But the latter is not the kind of question to ask oneself too often if one tries to be a man who thinks for himself. Then—I am constantly asking myself—what is the proper way to live?

We are hard at work here developing a 70-acre farm from the wilderness into which the 'tween-years depression had plunged it in order to turn it into a modern self-sustaining farm. Before, on our 5-acre holding in England, we had eschewed most machinery. Now I find myself forced to hire expensive machines for draining and clearing rock, to buy a tractor, muck-spreader, ploughs and gear of various kind. Our "self-supporting" activity gets left because there is so much farm work to do. Aren't we going the way of ten thousand other commercial farmers and land exploiters? We are deep in debt—have to get more and more cattle to try to get us out—have to employ a man so that I can get away to do my television work and make some money—and I work to pay the man. This is not "homesteading"?

But what is?

A man who works in an office and plays about on 10 acres on weekends and grows a few cabbages?

### Compromise

To be self-sufficient in food—I know how hard you have to work; I've done it. Marvelous work, the finest there is—but it's so easy to compromise. Buy and bring in cattle and pig and poultry feed? What's self-sufficient about that? Throw grain then, maybe, and thresh it and grind it? What with? Load up with modern machinery? What's self-sufficient about that? Who's got to make, and service, the machinery? Are we content to have a race of wage slaves in factories

in order to support us elite homesteaders on our happy farms?

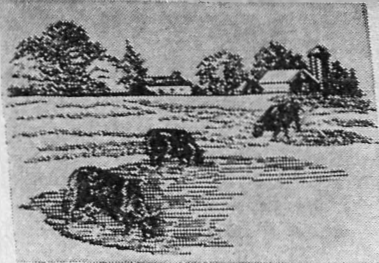
We have a huge deep freeze now; would I be content to work in a deep-freeze-making factory? Well, no. Have I a right to expect others to do so, to support my (possibly essentially bogus) decentralist philosophy? Become then a "Thoreau-type homesteader? Everybody forgets that Thoreau only spent two years out of his life homesteading and was not married.

At present we are trying to make every use of centralist industrialized society and at the same time have this posture of being "self-sufficient" and independent of it. We are completely dependent on it.

My own solution would be to get right away from it all; have no machinery except horse machinery which can be made by a blacksmith, no electricity, no mass-produced goods at all. I know this could be done. But how difficult, when you must first mortgage yourself to buy your share of the earth's surface to do it on. Compromise; it's all compromise!

### What Do We Want?

Well, we keep healthy, and have (sometimes) a smug feeling of superiority over the people who catch the 8:30 every morn-



ing. I'm not sure how justified it is though.

This doesn't mean I no longer believe in the decentralist movement. It only means I think it wants thinking about, and experimenting with, a hell of a lot more before we really know what we're doing. It's machinery that balls and complicates the whole issue up. I would love the kind of society you had in North America say in 1780—minus the religious intolerance. We can't have that sort of society again, it appears, because of the inter-

## Accolades to Sprague Family

Interest in and response to the Ken and Dee Sprague family's stand against vaccination (reported in the January and February *Green Revolutions*) has been lively. Many were impressed with the fact that five children (8 to 22 years) have known not a single dental cavity among them. "Bravo" wrote one reader. "This should be featured! Let's hear the inside—how they did it."

The Spragues do not seek publicity (they declined an invitation for a radio appearance). But stories of their experience will appear in *Lyle Stuart's Independent* and in the April issues of *Lei's Live* and *Herald of Health*.

They lived and worked at the Heathcote School of Living Center without salary. They incurred heavy expenses because of their stand; the December phone bill rose to \$130 in an effort to locate legal counsel. Civil Liberties defense, and to keep in touch  
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nal combustion engine and all that. What then can we have—do we want? Anyone can see what we don't want.

Anyway, I'm beginning to think Sally and I are barking up the wrong tree here. I'm beginning to think we should farm for self-sufficiency only—no cash crops—no government subsidies and handouts—no hired or bought machinery—no hired man. The old people here built fine houses out of the native rock with earth mortar—free. We buy-buy-buy. Cement! Asbestos! Piping! Plastic! The lot! Somehow there doesn't seem any way out of it. We've 20 acres of woodland here; we buy coal, and electric heating.

(to be continued)

## Comfrey Is A Good Healer

The work of Dr. Charles Macalister of Liverpool Hospital in the 1930s shows that comfrey contains a substance ("allantoin") which can help bones knit, heal internal irritations and external sores more effectively than the chemical copy used by the orthodox. Modern herbalists know its qualities and add to its long record of healing.

Mrs. Dorothy Johnson (New Zealand) reports that she grew up to 124 tons of comfrey fodder per acre. She says:

"A neighbor of mine, a cardiac and allergy asthmatic, nibbled absentmindedly at some comfrey leaves while we discussed its virtues in horse breeding. The next day he rang to tell me he had had his first unbroken night's sleep in 30 years. For weeks he ate a little raw comfrey every day and slept through every night."

A Mr. Paskin, Victoria, B. C., kept records of inquirers and their results from the comfrey plants he supplied them. A man who used small sliced pieces of root in salad found relief from congestion. Another eats 8 to 10 leaves in raw salads and sandwiches each day and is completely relieved of a bad case of congestion.

Research shows that comfrey leaves are a high-protein spinach, rich in minerals and vitamin A. The best eating variety is Bocking No. 4.

### How to Use Comfrey

Wash young leaves and include in salad, or in sandwiches as with lettuce.

Place washed leaves in an enamel saucepan, without any water, and cook at low heat for 10 minutes. Serve with a little lemon juice or salt and butter.

Use liberal quantities of the washed leaves in soups and stews.

Dry the leaves carefully and grind to a powder. Use powder, with a teaspoonful of carob flour, in a glass of water for a good "tea."

Add chopped green comfrey leaves (or dried comfrey flour) to scrambled eggs.

Comfrey au gratin is made by putting a layer of cooked rice on the bottom of a baking dish, then a layer of cooked comfrey leaves with some grated cheese and butter, and then repeat with more layers of rice and comfrey. Add milk to barely cover and bake for an hour in a fairly hot oven.

Add cooked comfrey to white sauce and serve on hot toast.

[The above is taken from *Comfrey, The Wonder Plant*, Box 122, Otorohanga, New Zealand.]