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NOTE FOR PRESS .

FELTWELL FEN

Feltwell Fen and its reclamation have caught the public imagination. For here was potentially rich land ready to be used for human service; awaiting the farmsteads and the roads and all the signs of civilization associated rather with pioneering in a new continent than with farming in the most densely populated country in Europe.

Once, the Fen was just a fen. The most recent effort to develop it was made about 35 years ago. It failed; and the flooding of the Fen in 1915 put an end, for the time being, to further attempts at reclamation.

As recently as 1940, practically all the ditches and main drains were silted up. Now, an extensive drainage scheme is in progress. Something like 30 miles of main and subsidiary dykes are being cleared and put in order, as well as 100 miles of farm ditches.

In 1940 there were no hard roads in the Fen. Now there are miles of good concrete roads made or in the making.

In 1940, nearly 1,000 acres of the Fen were covered with bushes, and the remainder with rough grass and weeds. Now, a thousand acres have already been reclaimed and cropped. Corn, potatoes, celery, carrots, sugar beet and other crops are grown.

In 1940 there was little or no available labour. There were no farm buildings or cottages. Now, there are two sets of farm buildings, a set of workmens' cottages, hutments to house 80 workers - and a canteen.

Lastly, Feltwell Fen has a railway of its own - 20 miles of it. In 1940 this railway ~~seemed~~ likely to become derelict. Now, it has been taken over by the Ministry of Agriculture. Not only will it ~~serve~~ the transport needs of a local sugar beet factory, but it will help to solve the transport problems of the farmers already established in parts of the Fen, and it will play an important part in the development of the whole.

The work at Feltwell Fen is still going on. Soon, it is hoped, the whole of this area - once a wilderness - will be in full production for the Nation's good.

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