

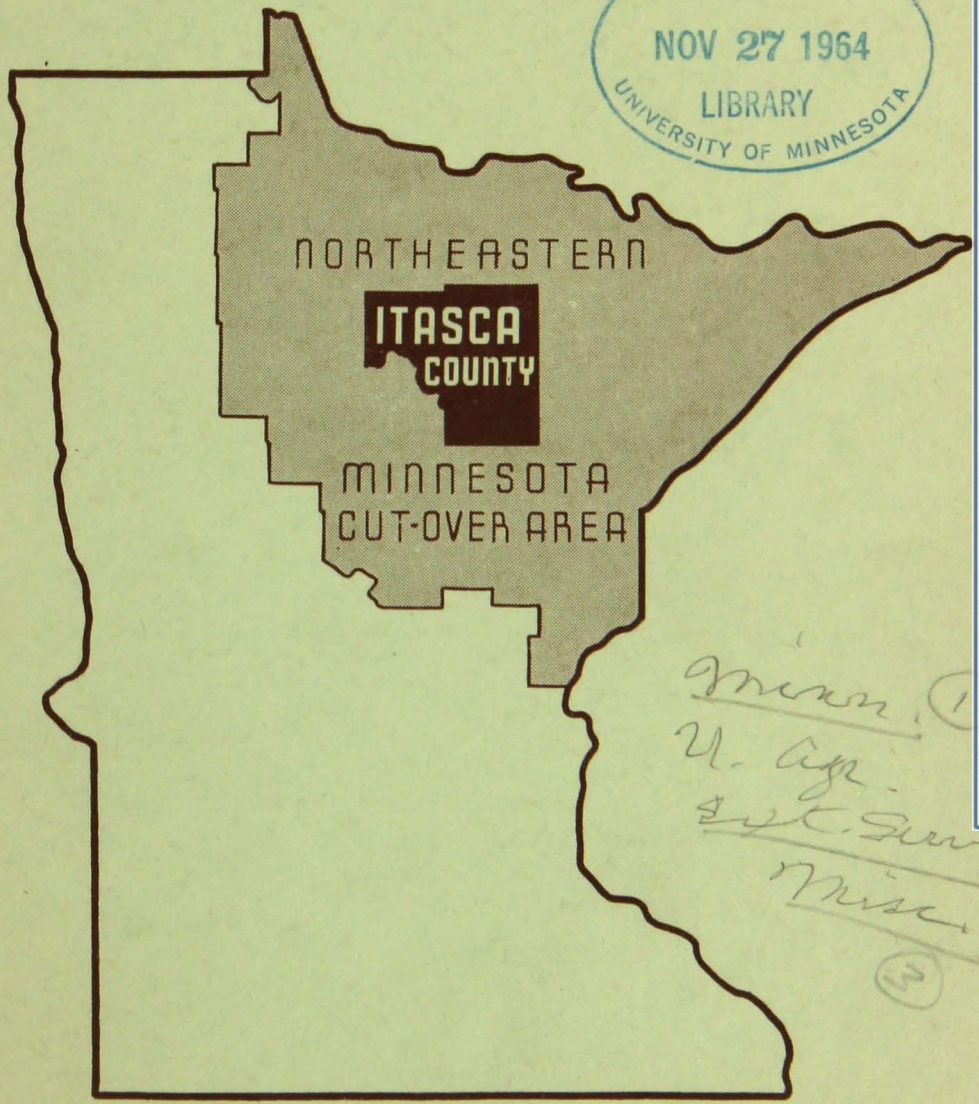
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# ITASCA COUNTY PEOPLE

## *Study their Land*

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Report of  
Land Use Study in  
Itasca County

by

County Officials  
Township Officials

and

Land Use Committee

assisted by

The Agricultural Extension Service  
University of Minnesota

and

Bureau of Agricultural Economics  
U. S. D. A.

June 1942

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## ITASCA COUNTY LAND USE COMMITTEE

William Bischoff, Chairman ..... Itasca County Commissioner  
Harry Holmes ..... Itasca County Commissioner  
Frank McCullough ..... Itasca County Commissioner  
Joseph Rydrych ..... Itasca County Commissioner  
George Shook ..... Itasca County Commissioner  
Thomas Erskine, Auditor ..... Itasca County  
Elmer Lundquist ..... Land Commissioner  
Reid Brown, President ..... Itasca County Farm Bureau  
Martin Nesselth, Chairman AAA, Itasca County Soil Conservation  
Mrs. Gertrude Hall, Supt. of Schools ..... Itasca County  
Harry LeSueur, Highway Engineer ..... Itasca County  
Val Angell, Forester ..... Itasca County  
C. E. Knutsen ..... National Forest Service  
Joseph Kehborn ..... State Forest Service  
Harold Aiton, Supervisor .... Farm Security Administration  
A. H. Frick, County Agent .... Agricultural Extension Service

## Township Land-Use Planning Committees

### Alvwood

Gilbert Peterson  
Earl White  
Andrew Holtquist

### Arbo

Melvin Troop  
Henry Riehle  
Fred Seeling  
L. D. Ketchum  
Mrs. Seeling  
Mrs. Ketchum

### Ardenhurst

Martin Nesseth  
J. E. Gupta  
R. W. Bender

### Balsam

William Kinnunen  
Otto J. Kinnunen  
Henry Rahko  
T. W. Ahola

### Bass Brook

W. O. Cronkrite  
Vic St. Martin  
Paul Libby  
Harry Gist

### Bass Lake

C. H. Garloch  
Silas Gaard  
Carl Larson

### Bearville

P. M. Lagerquist  
Elmer Olson  
Miles A. Nelson

### Blackberry

Victor E. Backstrom  
Geo. Sutherland  
Louis Larson  
D. C. Anderson  
Lowell Swanson  
K. S. Kluck

### Bigfork

Earl Patrow  
W. W. Brown  
Claus A. Swanson

### Bowstring

Wm. Schultz  
Geo. Poole  
J. W. McMeekin  
L. T. Roberts  
John R. Byers  
H. M. Sword  
Carl A. E. Fager

### Carpenter

J. K. Jonnasson  
Albert J. Pearson  
Sim Mattson  
Henry Arnebeck

### Deer River

Harlan Noble  
Clifford Davis  
F. E. Drotts

### Feeley

Emil L. Wang  
K. J. Mellinger  
Joe Mostoller  
Clarence Rosholt  
G. A. Johnson

### Good Hope

Herman Nestberg  
William Ojanen  
George Johnson

### Goodland

G. W. Brownlee  
C. E. Featherstone  
Leverne A. Lundberg  
Wes Lawrence

### Grand Rapids

William Hoolihan  
Ronald Fraser  
James Hagen  
Pete Peterson

### Grattan

Martin Torkelson  
Will Buntemeier

### Harris

Arthur Romans  
Geo. Becker, Jr.  
H. M. Thaxter  
L. F. Romans

### Iron Range

John N. Brown  
Gabriel Troumbley

### Kinghurst

John Kolivosky  
Wesley A. Waller

### Lawrence

Emil Carlson  
Wesley Kent  
Forest Eckert  
Steve Kovacovich

### Liberty

George Hauck  
Howard Bailey  
George Davis

### Oteneagen

Julius Venne  
Sulo Mattila  
John Lindahl  
Martin Korp

### Moose Park

Elmer Olafson  
Clarence Fertig  
Andrew Michalick

### Morse

E. H. Griffin  
Fred Villeneuve  
C. F. Seavey  
Andy Walker

### Nore

Joe Fink  
Edward F. Bowman  
Bert Allen

### Max

Eino M. Leino  
Emil Kallio  
Eino Kallio

### Nashwank

Gilbert J. Lee  
Geo. P. Maurin, Jr.  
Harry Olson

### Greenway

Bert Siden  
A. Columbo  
J. M. Russ  
O. H. Wilson  
Marshall Stewart

### Lone Pine

Joe Chastan  
Phillip Wydra  
John C. Higginbotham  
Oscar Olson

### Marcell

James Snell  
Ashley Alden  
T. H. Newburg  
Carl Helleckson  
R. G. Barse

### Lake Jesse

Elmer Alzen  
Erwin Lee

### Allen B. LaPier

### Sand Lake

R. V. C. Blythe  
Willis Ames  
Bruno Schaar, Jr.  
Eugene D. Stone

### Pomroy

Ole Paulson  
Al Herry

### Sago

J. W. Brown  
Jay W. Hervey  
W. C. Goodwin  
Clarence Mostoller

### Spang

W. F. Kutcher  
Earl Lipsey  
Fred Arnold  
Leslie Childs  
Webb A. Newhall

### Stokes

Ted Pederson  
Frank Turek  
Harry DeVries

### Third River

Leonard Bodien  
John Vernlund  
Knut Olson

### Trout Lake

Wm. Walburn  
Willis P. Willardson  
Iver Madsen  
Joe Streetar

### Wabana

Elmer Yelle  
Albert Kekkonen  
James Neubauer

### Wawina

Levi Komula  
Waino Pietila  
Eino Esterberg  
Tyne Heikinen  
J. W. Oaks

### Wirt

Louis Drtina  
Corbett Davidson  
Ray Johnson

### 55-23

John Furlong  
Eino Hamar  
Joe Smith

### 58-22

Merrill Barr  
Erick Hietala  
Wallace Brinkman

### 59-22

Joel Koivisto  
Alex Clusiau  
Emil Wesanto  
Frank Pontius

58-23  
Matt Schumaker

59-23  
Fred Brooks  
Chet Moellering  
Phillips

60-23  
Miles Nelson

61-23  
Miles Nelson

53-24  
Same as 53-25

59-24  
Matt Schumaker

60-24  
Chas. Burroughs

61-24  
Same as 60-24

53-25  
Howard Watson  
Oscar Struble  
Carl Phillips  
Milton H. Hanson  
Clair Phillips

60-25  
Chas. Burroughs

61-25  
Chas. Burroughs

62-25  
Ed Guthrie  
Al Trafton  
O. G. Anenson  
Tom Erickson

57-26  
A. R. Reed

62-26-27  
Vernon A. Rahier  
Ward Johnson  
L. W. Holme

54-27  
Arthur C. Foster  
Fritz Bertram

55-27  
Arthur C. Foster  
Fritz Bertram  
Wm. Schanen

57-26  
Russell Englis  
Silas Gaard  
Chris Howe  
Roy Reid

143-25  
Art Foster

144-26  
John Luko

145-26  
John Olson  
Julius Grauman

146-26  
Hjalmer Lind

144-25  
Art Foster  
Wm. Schanen

56-27  
Wm. Schanen  
Joe Venne  
Harlan Noble  
C. M. Grommesche

145-27

146-27-28-29

147-26-27-28-29

Mr. Allen  
Forest Ranger

To The Commissioners Of Itasca County:

GENTLEMEN:

At your request a land use study of Itasca County has been made. We submit herewith data compiled from county records, which give a fairly accurate picture of the use of land, tax status of land, tax valuations, tax rates, tax levies, and collections and bonded debt by township, school districts and for the county as a whole. It also gives pertinent facts on school income and expense by districts and welfare costs for the county.

Meetings have been held in all communities in the county. The above-mentioned figures and facts were presented and discussed at every meeting held. Those in attendance voted unanimously recommending that all township boards cooperate and classify all land in each township for the following purposes:

1. To get a clear picture of all land now in farms and suitable for farms.
2. To select wild land of good quality and properly located that may be suitable to sell for new farms.
3. To designate for conservation uses all land which because of quality or location is not adapted for farm use for the present.
4. The above classification to serve as a pattern of settlement that will aim to consolidate farm settlement. Use only the best agricultural land for farming, reduce or eliminate scattered settlement and reduce costs of public services.

Township boards in all organized townships and selected local committees in all unorganized townships have met and classified all land in each township. A county map showing classification of all land as made by township boards and township committees has been made and is on file in the County Auditor's office.

All statistical material used and all other material used in the study is presented in condensed form in this report, also a statement of recommendations made by township committees.

Respectfully submitted,

WILLIAM BISCHOFF,  
Chairman County Committee.



## General Information

Minnesota law provides that in counties like Itasca, land on which taxes have not been paid for approximately seven years, shall **forfeit to the state to be held in trust for local taxing units**. This law provides that ownership of such forfeited land shall be as follows:

State .....	10%
County .....	30%
Township .....	20%
School District .....	40%

There are two important facts involved in the forfeiture of land under this Minnesota law. (1) People within a county own 90% interest in land forfeited for taxes; (2) Responsibility for handling tax forfeited land is delegated to County Commissioners and Township Supervisors. Thus, all in one day, July 3, 1941, citizens of Itasca County inherited 90% interest in 379,186 acres of land, and at the same time inherited the responsibility for handling this vast amount of land. It is not surprising, therefore, that Itasca County people, particularly their responsible officials, the Board of County Commissioners, began to think seriously of this vast and important new job delegated to them.

### A Bit Of History

When the U. S. A. was established as an independent nation, all of the land except a very small portion owned by eastern seaboard colonists, was owned by the U. S. Government. Since this nation was to be a democracy, governed by free, independent citizens, the policy of private ownership of land was early established.

To accomplish this conversion of land from public to private ownership, several methods were planned.

1. Grants of land were made by the Government to railroad companies to aid in establishing transportation systems.
2. Grants of land were made to all states for the purpose of establishing an educational foundation in each state.
3. A direct method of conversion to private ownership was the well-known Homestead Act. The wisdom and desirability of private ownership of land has been firmly established and has worked well generally throughout the nation.

### Northeastern Minnesota Hardest Hit

What has happened in Itasca County has happened generally in all Northeastern Minnesota counties.

Because of our national policy to have land in private ownership, state and local officials have been reluctant to adopt tax forfeiture laws, which tend to reverse the process and convert privately owned lands to public ownership.

Although tax delinquency became a serious problem in this area many years ago, various measures for tax abatement were tried out in the belief or hope that by making it relatively easy to settle delinquent taxes, owners might be induced to pay up back taxes and thus leave the land in private ownership. Because of the depression following the last World War, reduced land values, and high tax rates, delinquency continued to increase in spite of opportunities for easy settlement of delinquent taxes.

### **Tax Forfeiture Law**

In 1935 tax delinquency had become so serious in the State, particularly in the Northeastern cut-over section, that the legislature passed a law providing roughly that if taxes are not paid for seven years, land will forfeit to the state. Since that time at least 6,000,000 acres have forfeited in Northeastern Minnesota. Some of the counties made use of this tax forfeiture law and forfeited land in 1936, others in later years. Itasca County did not file notice until 1940 and the land did not actually forfeit until July 3, 1941.

### **Experience In Other Counties**

In the meantime other counties that had forfeited land in 1936 or later had accumulated considerable experience in handling tax forfeited land. The State Legislature had passed other laws having a bearing on the handling of tax forfeited land, such as land classification laws, a statute of limitations to aid in clearing titles to tax forfeited land, and a land exchange law.

### **Request For Land Use Study**

The County Commissioners of Itasca County realized the task they had inherited through the forfeiture of land, and knowing that these problems had been carefully studied in the state, requested the State Agricultural Extension Service and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the United States Department of Agriculture to aid in making a study of land problems in Itasca County. Since the County Extension Service is a joint agency representing the County, State, and U. S. Department of Agriculture, the task of carrying out the land use study was delegated to the County Agent's Office.

### **Local Sponsorship**

Full responsibility for handling tax forfeited land is with the Board of County Commissioners and Township Boards, but since

every property owner in the county is directly affected by what is done with the land, a local committee representing the county, various state and federal agencies, and particularly the land owners of the county, was set up to sponsor and direct the study.

### **Methods Of Conducting This Study**

The first step in such a study naturally requires a thorough knowledge of the present land situation in the county to be studied. A representative of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics spent many weeks in the various county offices compiling data pertinent to such a study. Most of this data is presented below in condensed form.

The County Extension Service under the direction of the County Land Use Committee arranged for meetings to be held at convenient points throughout the county. After the inventory of the county was largely completed, the County Land Use Committee convened, considered the facts and methods of procedure to be followed, and gave their approval. Then the job of presenting these facts to all interested citizens was ready to be undertaken.

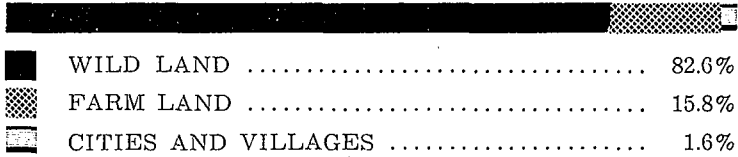
Between February 20 and March 30, 1942, educational meetings were held in the county at which the statistical data gathered were presented by means of graphs, charts, and word of mouth. Likewise some of the experiences of other counties with similar problems were presented. All of these matters were discussed and each township represented, asked their Town Boards or other selected committee to meet at some later date and carefully classify all land in each township, as the committee in each township felt that it should be classified. In this way every 40 acres of land in all of Itasca County have been classified by local people.

# FACTS ABOUT ITASCA COUNTY

## Present Use Of Land

The following information is presented to show some of the facts, figures, and problems involved in the use of land in Itasca County.

GRAPH 1 — PRESENT USE OF LAND IN ITASCA COUNTY



Graph No. 1: This graph shows how land is being used in Itasca County at present. There are 1,733,496 acres in the county. 15.8% of all the land in the county is now occupied as farm land. 70,124 acres of this farm land has been cleared for crops. 28,371 acres or 1.6% is occupied by towns and villages. The balance, 1,431,193 acres or 82.6% is unoccupied wild land.

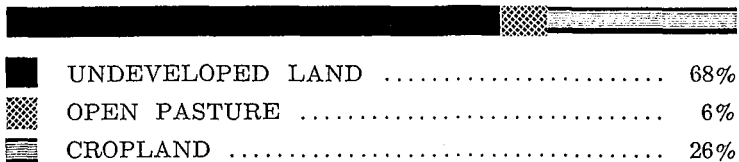
### USE OF LAND BY TOWNSHIPS

Township	Total Land Area	Acreage Farm Land	Acreage Crop Land	Acreage Non-Crop Open Pasture	No. of Farms
149-28					
Alvwood .....	22,740.15	4,292.0	628.4	299.0	39
56-25					
Arbo .....	22,052.6	3,622.7	943.3	142.0	53
150-28					
Ardenhurst .....	18,989.59	5,047.6	919.3	197.5	52
58-24: 58-25					
Balsam .....	40,219.69	6,549.9	1,234.4	196.7	71
55-26					
Bass Brook .....	17,275.69	6,401.4	2,279.1	811.5	76
56-26					
Bass Lake .....	19,175.32	5,885.2	1,488.2	877.0	67
60-22: 61-22					
Bearville .....	46,386.69	4,033.3	927.6	481.0	37
61-26: 61-27					
Bigfork .....	29,080.74	9,357.4	1,741.8	591.0	101
54-24					
Blackberry .....	22,570.50	7,541.0	2,493.6	189.7	78
147-25					
Bowstring .....	17,160.17	2,262.0	342.1	23.0	29
62-22: 62-23: 62-24					
Carpenter .....	66,486.67	6,640.0	1,915.6	736.0	62
N½ 56-27: 57-27					
Pt. 145-25					
Deer River .....	22,500.84	14,193.9	3,819.4	915.2	129
54-23					
Feeley .....	20,725.19	5,979.6	1,549.3	240.0	62
148-28					
Goodhope .....	20,070.92	5,826.0	1,128.1	569.5	65
54-22: 55-22					
Goodland .....	45,650.83	9,836.0	2,509.8	935.0	124
55-25					
Grand Rapids ...	21,755.95	7,879.5	2,694.4	302.5	97

150-27						
Grattan	21,928.19	3,399.0	808.6	82.0	23	
56-23						
Grenway	21,664.64	2,075.5	679.1	221.0	31	
54-25						
Harris	20,519.08	9,768.2	2,602.7	931.0	101	
56-24						
Iron Range	22,403.03	1,043.0	283.9	130.0	13	
149-27						
Kinghurst	21,598.14	1,302.0	247.3	169.9	13	
148-25						
Lake Jesse	21,973.37	4,979.1	973.6	187.0	72	
57-24						
Lawrence	21,586.97	4,897.2	1,401.0	0	61	
149-25: 150-25						
Liberty	45,321.41	2,817.7	600.9	121.0	25	
56-22						
Lone Pine	21,262.29	1,274.2	429.5	124.0	24	
59-26: 59-27						
Marcell	30,141.75	3,654.5	657.8	299.3	51	
148-27						
Max	19,077.60	4,705.7	710.9	287.5	60	
149-29						
Moose Park	23,216.22	4,635.0	908.7	246.9	51	
145-25						
Morse	23,368.65	6,644.0	1,094.0	195.0	96	
57-22: 57-23						
Nashwauk	45,105.19	8,770.6	3,202.4	1,380.3	158	
150-29						
Nore	23,113.64	3,555.5	1,093.1	241.4	38	
146-25						
Oteneagen	23,013.95	5,799.0	1,569.4	320.5	55	
150-26						
Pomroy	22,929.40	2,657.0	758.8	180.8	25	
53-23						
Sago	21,827.89	5,359.5	1,463.0	370.7	61	
148-26						
Sand Lake	18,957.78	2,349.0	483.7	44.0	25	
53-26: 53-27						
Spang	34,261.73	4,274.0	809.1	384.0	39	
60-26: 60-27						
Stokes	35,690.86	3,385.0	557.9	238.2	44	
148-29						
Third River	22,503.36	2,543.0	342.9	187.1	27	
55-24						
Trout Lake	20,296.39	8,082.1	2,643.0	138.5	96	
57-25						
Wabana	18,884.89	1,679.0	357.2	0	21	
53-22						
Wawina	22,874.45	4,704.0	1,940.8	166.8	72	
149-26						
Wirt	21,558.49	3,136.4	727.2	133.0	35	
53-24						
Unorganized	20,779.79	6,927.2	1,740.2	177.5	58	
53-25						
Unorganized	19,231.86	915.0	147.4	25.0	9	
54-26						
Unorganized	19,564.42	2,621.0	536.4	299.0	30	
54-27						
Unorganized	12,195.76	144.0	28.7	0	2	
55-23						
Unorganized	22,575.03	4,604.8	1,595.1	86.0	57	
55-27						
Unorganized	11,587.10	7,461.3	2,271.3	307.2	53	
57-26						
Unorganized	16,775.45	1,886.3	361.8	70.0	25	
58-22						
Unorganized	22,199.47	3,728.7	1,375.0	319.2	58	
58-23						
Unorganized	22,022.46	2,177.3	721.2	139.0	36	
58-26						
Unorganized	19,999.81	1,500.5	423.9	70.0	22	
58-27						
Unorganized	11,790.98	703.1	279.9	55.0	12	

59-22	Unorganized	22,185.92	1,838.5	471.3	254.5	28
59-23	Unorganized	22,369.21	2,286.0	359.5	307.0	15
59-24	Unorganized	20,301.56	54.0	15.0	0	1
59-25	Unorganized	20,001.63	45.7	6.0	1.0	1
60-23	Unorganized	23,219.29	160.0	9.0	10.0	2
60-25	Unorganized	22,953.85	745.0	122.3	41.0	8
61-23	Unorganized	25,294.95	12.5	0	0	1
61-24	Unorganized	22,149.05	70.0	2.0	10.0	1
61-25	Unorganized	22,995.02	2,130.5	394.2	81.0	14
62-25	Unorganized	22,420.00	13,717.0	3,092.1	207.2	111
62-26	Unorganized	23,026.03	2,996.0	553.8	108.0	26
62-27	Unorganized	9,201.94	110.0	8.3	0	1
143-25	Unorganized	1,326.18	828.5	284.5	15.0	7
144-26	Unorganized	1,679.31	359.0	90.7	8.0	5
145-26	Unorganized	17,243.85	2,181.7	529.5	63.8	21
146-26	Unorganized	22,281.19	2,492.0	645.6	3.0	26
147-26	Unorganized	16,829.08	160.0	30.0	0	3
147-29	Unorganized	22,626.88	240.0	59.7	70.0	1
144-25	Unorganized	2,589.00	None	None	None	None
56-27	Unorganized	6,039.00	None	None	None	None
145-27	Unorganized	613.00	None	None	None	None
146-27	Unorganized	11,273.00	None	None	None	None
147-27	Unorganized	20,069.00	None	None	None	None
146-28	Unorganized	2,346.00	None	None	None	None
147-28	Unorganized	20,566.00	None	None	None	None
146-29	Unorganized	19,863.00	None	None	None	None
60-24	Unorganized	21,261.00	None	None	None	None
Total		1,733,496.00	273,932.2	70,124.2	17,013.9	3,093

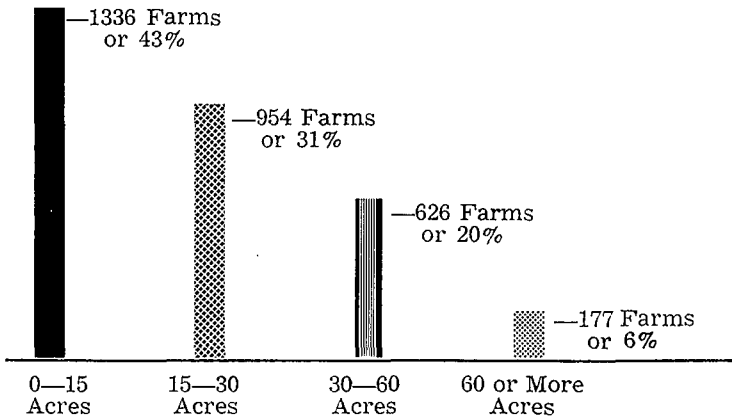
## GRAPH II — USE OF LAND ON AVERAGE FARM 89 ACRES



Graph No. 2: There are 3,093 farms in Itasca County. The average farm contains 89 acres. 23 acres of the farm are open

crop land, 6 acres non-crop, open pasture, and 60 acres or 68% is still wild land. It is evident that one of the serious problems of Itasca County from an agricultural standpoint is the small percentage of the county that is used for farms and the small percentage of the farm land that has been opened for crops. A better idea of the problem is shown by Graph No. 3 in which all the farms of Itasca County have been classified on the basis of crop acres.

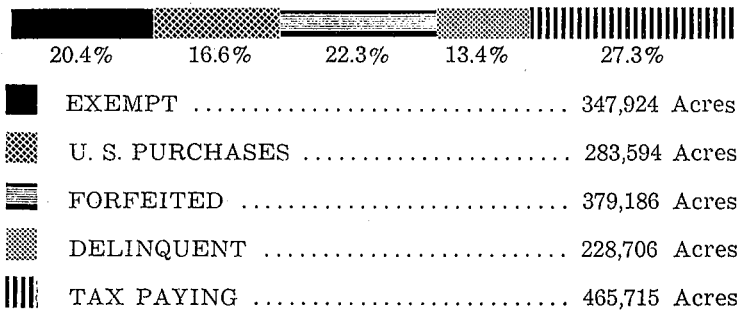
GRAPH III — 3,093 FARMS CLASSIFIED BY CROP ACRES



Graph No. 3: Out of 3,093 farms in the county, 1,336 farms or 43% of all the farms have from very little up to 15 crop acres per farm. 954 farms or 31% have from 15 to 30 crop acres. 626 farms or 20% have from 30 to 60 crop acres and 177 farms or 6% have 60 crop acres or more. 74% of all farms have 30 crop acres or less. This seems to indicate that the majority of farms have not enough crop acres to enable owners to make a living entirely from the farm. It leaves many of these small farmers dependant on income from outside sources, and indicates that one of the aims of development of Itasca County from an agricultural standpoint must be to increase the amount of crop acres per farm on many of the farms already established.

In the normal development of a timber section into a successful farming section, settlers have generally depended for some years on considerable outside employment to furnish them a living and to meet development expense on their farms. Since the depression and since the timber crop has been largely depleted, outside employment has been scarce to Itasca County settlers. As a result, many of those residing on these partially developed farms have been unable to get outside private employment and have had to depend on some sort of public relief.

GRAPH IV — TAX STATUS OF UNPLATTED LAND  
1,705,125 ACRES 100%



Graph No. 4: Shows the present tax status of all unplatted land in Itasca County, that is, all land outside of cities and villages. 347,924 acres or 20.4% are tax exempt. Most of this is state trust fund land that has never been sold, or was sold on contract for deed, and later reverted to the state.

During recent years the U. S. Government has purchased 283,594 acres in the Chippewa National Forest. This land of course pays no taxes. In 1941, 379,186 acres or 22.3% of the land in the county was forfeited for taxes and has been taken off the tax rolls. Of the land still on the tax rolls, 228,706 acres or 13.4% is tax delinquent. The balance, 465,715 acres or 27.3% is paying taxes.

**Land Policy In Reverse**

The above figures show how the process of converting land from public to private ownership has in recent years been working in reverse. Approximately 80% of all land in Itasca County was in private ownership and on the tax rolls in 1930. In 1941 this had been reduced to 698,869 acres on the tax rolls or a little more than 40%. This naturally raises a very serious question, because when land is taken off the tax rolls, if it is impossible to decrease materially tax expenditures, the amount of tax collected from land still on the tax rolls, must be increased.

TRENDS IN TAX FACTORS IN ITASCA COUNTY — 1930-1941

Acres On Tax Roll		
1930	1,359,864	
1941	694,421	Decrease 49%
Total Assessed Value		
1930	\$26,318,637	
1941	19,758,295	Decrease 25%
Taxes Levied		
1930	\$2,560,778	
1941	2,271,975	Decrease 11%



### Taxes Collected

1930 .....	\$2,304,070	
1941 .....	2,170,100	Decrease 5%

### Tax Rates

1930 .....	96.23 Mills	
1941 .....	113.89 mills	Increase 18%

### Distribution Of Tax Dollar

	1930	1941	Percent Change
State .....	5.8 cents	7.6 cents	Increase 31%
County General .....	20.8 cents	19.5 cents	Decrease 6%
County Welfare .....	4.3 cents	8.8 cents	Increase 104%
Towns, Cities, Villages	27.5 cents	24.3 cents	Decrease 11%
Schools .....	41.6 cents	39.8 cents	Decrease 4%
	100 cents	100 cents	

### Comments On Tax Figures

The loss of land from tax roll, while serious in acreage, has had little effect on tax collections, because much of this land has paid no tax for many years.

Decrease in total assessed value is more serious. There are four reasons for this decrease. (1) Fewer acres to assess; (2) Decrease in real value of land; (3) Decrease in real value of iron ore deposits, and; (4) the Homestead Classification Law passed in 1933 lowers assessed value on limited property used as a home by owners. (See discussion page 18).

The following table shows how valuations of various classes of property have changed:

#### CHANGES IN ASSESSED VALUES — 1930-1941

	Iron Ore	Unplatted Land	Cities & Villages	Personal Property	Total
1930 .....	\$18,811,917	4,365,901	1,637,913	1,502,906	26,318,637
1941 .....	15,327,617	2,057,493	1,453,929	919,256	19,758,295
Decrease.	3,484,300	2,308,408	183,984	583,650	6,560,342
% Decrease	19%	53%	11%	39%	25%

The greatest percentage of depreciation in value has been in unplatted property or land. This is caused by loss in acreage due to forfeiture, change in Homestead classification, and actual depreciation in land values.

Another important consideration is the increase in the mill rate. With total assessed value reduced by 25% and the tax collections reduced only 5% it of course, has been necessary to increase the mill rate.

Distribution of the tax dollar shows a reduction in proportion of the tax dollar used for general county expense, a reduction for towns, cities, villages, and schools, an increase of 31% for the state and 104% increase for the county's contribution to welfare.

**ITASCA COUNTY — Long Range**  
 Comparison of Tax Rates by Townships  
 for the 1941 Levy

	R. 29	R. 28	R. 27	R. 26	R. 25
T. 150	Nore  Tp. 45.20 T. 163.00	Ardenhurst <b>SCHOOL</b> Tp. 42.00 T. 159.80	Grattan  Tp. 29.30 T. 147.10	Pomroy  Tp. 26.00 T. 143.80	Liberty  Tp. 15.90 T. 133.70
T. 149	Moose Park  Tp. 123.00 T. 240.80	Alvwood <b>DISTRICT</b> Tp. 31.00 T. 148.80	Kinghurst  Tp. 51.00 T. 168.80	Wirt <b>SCHOOL</b> SL 42.90 Tp. 21.50 T. 153.20	149-25  Tp. 15.90 T. 104.70
T. 148	Third River  Tp. 31.00 T. 148.80	Good Hope <b>NUMBER</b> SL 22.40 Tp. 25.40 T. 165.60	Max  Tp. 26.00 T. 143.80	Sand Lake <b>DISTRICT</b>  Tp. 31.00 T. 119.80	Lake Jessie  Tp. 41.30 T. 130.10
T. 147	147-29  Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	147-28 <b>ONE</b> Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	147-27  Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	147-26 <b>NUMBER</b> Tp. 15.00 T. 103.80	Bowstring  SL 41.90 Tp. 14.30 T. 145.00
T. 146	146-29  Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	146-28	146-27	146-26 <b>SIX</b> Tp. 15.00 T. 103.80	Oteneagen  Tp. 16.00 T. 104.80
T. 145			145-27	145-26 Tp. 15.00 T. 103.80	Morse Tp. 40.70 T. 129.50
					Deer R. Tp. 29.40 T. 118.26
				144-26	144-25

State Rate .24 mills on Homestead Property.  
 State Rate 9.00 mills on Non-Homestead Property.  
 County Rate 32.80 including levy for C. Library.

**School District Rates — Mills**

Dist. 1	76.00
Dist. 2	34.60
Dist. 6	47.00
Dist. 9	55.04
Dist. 10	41.00
Dist. 11	46.00

SL—Rate for State Loan to Township.  
 Tp—Township Tax Rate.  
 T—Total Tax Rate for all purposes includes state, county, school and township rates. For Homestead property, total rate would be 8.76 mills less than total shown in each township.

	R. 27	R. 26	R. 25	R. 24	R. 23	R. 22	
62-27 Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80		62-26 Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	62-25 Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80		Carpenter Tp. 58.30 T. 176.00		T. 62
		Bigfork Tp. 29.00 T. 146.80	61-25 Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	61-24 <b>SCHOOL</b> Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	61-23 Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	Bearville	T. 61
		Stokes <b>SCH. DIST.</b> Tp. 34.60 T. 123.40	60-25 Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	60-24 <b>DISTRICT</b> Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	60-23 Tp. 15.00 132.80	Tp. 69.60 T. 187.40	T. 60
		Marcell <b>NUMBER SIX</b> Tp. 31.00 T. 123.40	59-25 Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	59-24 <b>NUMBER</b> Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	59-23 Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	59-22 Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	T. 59
58-27 Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80		58-26 Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80		Balsam <b>ONE</b> Tp. 33.60 T. 151.40	58-23 Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	58-22 Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	T. 58
	Deer River Tp. 29.40 T. 118.20	57-26 Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	Wabana Tp. 32.40 T. 150.20	Lawrence <b>SCHOOL</b> Tp. 21.00 T. 97.40	Nashauk <b>DISTRICT</b> Tp. 17.53 T. 93.93	<b>S. D.</b> <b>NO. 9</b> Tp. 17.53 T. 114.37	T. 57
	<b>S. D.</b> <b>NO. 6</b>	56-26 <b>SCHOOL</b> Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	Arbo Tp. 30.60 T. 148.40	Iron Range <b>NUMBER</b> Tp. 21.15 T. 97.55	Greenway <b>TWO</b> Tp. 23.20 T. 99.60	Lone Pine Tp. 32.00 T. 149.80	T. 56
56-27 Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80		Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	Tp. 30.60 T. 148.40	Tp. 21.15 T. 97.55	Tp. 23.20 T. 99.60	Tp. 32.00 T. 149.80	
55-27 Tp. 15.00 T. 97.80		Bass Brook <b>DISTRICT</b> Tp. 7.20 T. 125.00	Grand Rapids Tp. 26.30 T. 144.10	Trout L. Tp. 33.10 T. 150.90	55-23 Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	Goodland SL 115.30 Tp. 78.80 T. 311.90	T. 55
	<b>S. D.</b> <b>NO. 10</b>	54-26 <b>NUMBER</b> Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	Harris Tp. 23.30 T. 141.10	Blackberry Tp. 38.00 T. 155.80	Feeley Tp. 23.70 T. 141.50	<b>S. D.</b> <b>NO. 11</b> SL 115.30 Tp. 78.80 T. 281.90	T. 54
54-27 Tp. 15.00 T. 97.80		Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	Tp. 23.30 T. 141.10	Tp. 38.00 T. 155.80	Tp. 23.70 T. 141.50	SL 115.30 Tp. 78.80 T. 281.90	
		Spang <b>ONE</b> Tp. 46.50 T. 164.30	53-25 Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	53-24 Tp. 15.00 T. 132.80	Sago Tp. 25.80 T. 143.60	Wawina SL 9.60 Tp. 43.40 T. 170.80	T. 53

## Explanation Of Above Map Showing Tax Rates By Townships

The total mill rate for any township as shown by the bottom figure in each township is obtained by adding state, county, school district, and township rates. The state, county, and various school district rates are shown in the lower lefthand corner of the map.

The matter is a bit confused because of different state rates for Homestead (property on which owner lives) and Non-Homestead (property on which owner does not live). This Homestead Classification Law not only provides for different rates, but also for a different basis of determining assessed value. This law applies only to property having a full and true value of \$4,000 or less. All values above \$4,000 are handled the same, whether Homestead or Non-Homestead.

The basis for determining assessed value from full and true value for Homestead and Non-Homestead property, both for farms and villages or city property, is shown in Table No. II below:

Table II

	Full and True Value	Assessed Value Farm Real Estate		Assessed Value City Real Estate
Homestead Property .....	\$4,000	(1) \$ 800	(2)	\$1,000
Non-Homestead Property ....	\$4,000	(3) \$1,333	(4)	\$1,600
(1) 20% of full and true value.				
(2) 25% of full and true value.				
(3) 33½% of full and true value.				
(4) 40% of full and true value.				

### STATE RATE FOR 1941

Homestead Property .....	.24 mills
Non-Homestead Property .....	9.00 mills

#### For Example, Total Tax Rate In Alwwood Township In 1941 Is:

State .....	.24 mills
County .....	32.80 mills
School District No. 1 .....	76.00 mills
Township .....	31.00 mills
Total Homestead Rate .....	140.04 mills
To Get Non-Homestead Rate Add .....	8.76 mills
Total Non-Homestead Rate .....	148.80 mills

The above will explain why adjoining farms in different townships or school districts may be assessed at different rates. Also why adjoining farms in the same township may carry different assessed values and different rate if one is homestead property and the other is not.

### Expenses For Road And School Services

Two important items of public expense are roads and schools. In fact these two items usually account for more than half of the local taxes. The county engineer's office states that there are about 2,700 miles of road in the county or .89 of a mile of road per settler. They also state that the present cost of road construction is \$3,000 to \$5,000 per mile, and that road maintenance costs are from \$80 to \$100 per mile.

The business manager of Unorganized School District No. 1 states that bus transportation costs about 50c per mile per day or about \$90 per mile per year.

The above figures show what an additional mile of road may mean in additional expense to taxpayers, particularly if school bus service is furnished.

### Estimated Annual Cost Of Public Services For One Mile Of Road

Interest on construction cost, est. ....	\$100
Annual maintenance cost .....	90
School bus service, per mile .....	90
	<hr/>
Total .....	\$280

The above estimates make it clear that if careful planning will save the construction of even one mile of road or can save the annual cost of maintaining a mile of road, and can also save the cost of running a school bus over a mile of road four times per day for a school year, the total saving is very much worth while. The importance of this saving is still further emphasized if the following facts are considered.

An unnecessary tax of \$50 levied annually on any piece of property decreases the value of that property at least \$1,000.

The above seems at first like a rather extravagant statement. It is based on the following reasoning. Assume there is a farm in your community for which you or some nearby farmer would be willing to pay \$100 annual rent. Assume also that the normal taxes on this farm are \$50 per year. The owner of the farm would receive \$100 yearly in rent and would pay \$50 yearly in taxes. His net income from the farm after paying taxes would be \$50, which is equal to 5% interest on \$1,000. The farm would be worth \$1,000 to its owner as income earning property. Or some person with \$1,000 to invest would willingly pay \$1,000 for the farm if he could reasonably expect conditions would continue about the same. Assume again that something happens to change these conditions. Excessive road or school costs or other extravagant expenditures of public funds may result in raising taxes on this farm to \$100 per year.

The owner may still receive the \$100 per year in rent. He must use \$100 to pay taxes or lose his farm through forfeiture. His net income from the farm will be **nothing**. The value of the farm to him based on net income will be **nothing**. Likewise, no investor will want to buy the farm. The \$50 excess tax in this case has reduced the real value of the farm \$1,000.

If we refer to the above table showing average annual cost for public services for one mile of road, we will see that such costs may reduce the value of property, taxed to pay these costs by several thousand dollars. Likewise, if this unnecessary expense can be saved, property values in the same area will be increased several thousand dollars.

# SCHOOL DISTRICT DATA FOR SCHOOL YEAR — 1940-41

RECEIPTS						ENROLLMENT	
District Number	Total	State Aids	Local Taxes	10 Mill Co. Rate	Other	Total Enroll- ment	Average Daily Attendance
1 .....	\$397,645	\$176,847	\$125,550	\$89,513	\$5,735	3,746	3,520
2 .....	337,596	45,879	241,832	49,746	69	2,078	1,936
6 .....	105,385	64,492	13,645	27,220	28	1,203	1,114
9 .....	298,295	22,717	244,682	30,859	37	1,217	1,182
10 .....	3,988	2,155	505	1,328	..	57	51
11 .....	6,631	3,895	617	2,119	..	83	73
<b>TOTAL</b> .....	<b>\$1,149,471</b>	<b>\$315,985</b>	<b>\$626,831</b>	<b>\$200,785</b>	<b>\$5,869</b>	<b>8,384</b>	<b>7,876</b>

EXPENSES								
District Number	Maintenance Total	Teachers' Salaries	Cost Transpor- tation	Other	Gen. Exp. Debt	Build- ings	Average Cost per Pupil (1)	
							Main- tenance	Trans- portat'n
1 ..	\$349,108	\$194,008	\$78,150	\$76,950	\$18,440	\$55,619	\$93	\$20
2 ..	350,024	188,650	28,034	133,341	..	29,963	168	13
6 ..	119,775	52,535	31,125	36,117	1,222	15,736	100	26
9 ..	288,184	137,008	16,009	135,166	..	57,421	237	13
10 ..	3,968	2,543	517	908	..	416	69	9
11 ..	11,056	4,643	4,850	1,563	..	159	133	58
<b>TOTAL</b> .....	<b>\$1,122,115</b>	<b>\$579,387</b>	<b>\$158,684</b>	<b>\$384,045</b>	<b>\$19,662</b>	<b>\$159,314</b>	<b>\$142</b>	<b>\$20</b>

(1) Average cost per pupil is based on maintenance cost, but does not include debt or building costs.

## Public Indebtedness

The debt situation of the county, townships, cities and villages, and school districts of Itasca County was as follows on December 31, 1941:

	Net Debt	1941 Assessed Valuation	Debt Per \$1,000 Assessed Value
County .....	\$298,395.00	\$19,758,295.00	\$15.10
<b>Townships that have debt:</b>			
Alwood .....	680.00	7,724.00	88.00
Arbo .....	526.00	54,589.00	96.35
Bigfork .....	1,483.00	30,213.00	49.10
Balsam .....	228.00	19,301.00	11.81
Bowstring .....	1,960.00	15,323.00	127.91
Carpenter .....	224.00	61,193.00	3.66
Grand Rapids .....	14,839.00	254,525.00	58.30
Goodland .....	6,000.00	31,430.00	190.90
Greenway .....	66,510.00	244,006.00	272.57
Good Hope .....	1,600.00	13,028.00	122.81
Lawrence .....	1,487.00	27,924.00	52.53
Moose Park .....	4,500.00	10,308.00	436.55
Morse .....	40.00	20,725.00	1.93
Nore .....	797.00	10,590.00	75.25
Nashwauk .....	3,949.00	1,835,703.00	2.15
Trout Lake .....	356.00	61,725.00	5.76
Third River .....	1,700.00	8,139.00	235.75
Wawina .....	1,871.00	16,222.00	115.33
<b>Villages that have debt:</b>			
Bovey .....	38,307.00	978,083.00	39.16
Bigfork .....	21,000.00	20,650.00	1,016.94
Calumet .....	72,000.00	997,169.00	72.20
Deer River .....	9,778.00	134,805.00	72.53
Grand Rapids .....	54,000.00	851,215.00	63.43
Keewatin .....	115,750.00	2,244,476.00	51.57
Marble .....	81,500.00	3,590,810.00	22.69
Nashwauk .....	80,020.00	972,559.00	8.22
Taconite .....	12,090.00	1,879,419.00	6.40
<b>School Districts that have debt:</b>			
No. 1 .....	417,884.00	2,445,852.00	170.85
No. 11 .....	10,301.00	22,284.00	462.25

## Public Welfare

Time and other factors have made it impractical to get full welfare statistics for this land use study. Such figures are important in such a study, because welfare costs represent one of the major items of public expense in the county.

Costs for welfare have risen immensely in the last decade. First, because of greater need caused by the general business collapse of 1929 and the depression following.

Second, because of a growing sense of responsibility of those who have for those who have not.

Third, because of a belief by many public officials and others that the liberal distribution of public funds was one way to bring about a redistribution of wealth, increase purchasing power, and thereby hastening recovery.

An indication of this increase in welfare expense in Itasca County is shown by the following figures:

Approximate cost of welfare, 1930 . . . . .	\$ 100,000
Approximate cost of welfare, 1941 . . . . .	1,500,000

In 1930 the full cost for welfare was met locally, while in 1941, local expenditures were about \$191,000 and the balance of the \$1,500,000 expended came from State and Federal funds.

### Relation Of Welfare Expense To Total Tax Collections

In many counties in Northeastern Minnesota welfare expenses equal or exceed total tax collections. In some counties four times as much is spent for welfare as is collected in taxes for all purposes.

Figures for Itasca County, 1941:

Total assessed value . . . . .	\$19,758,295
Total taxes collected . . . . .	2,170,100
Expended for welfare . . . . .	1,500,000
Welfare expenditures 69% of tax collections.	

Because of the large tax valuation in Itasca County due to iron ore (See figures p. 18) total tax collections are more than total welfare expenses.

In the rural areas of the county where taxes are raised mainly on land and other farm property, welfare expense in 1941, ranges from approximately as much as to three and four times as much as total tax collections.

### Considerable Improvement In 1942

Increased activity in mining, timber, and other industries due to the war, has materially reduced direct relief, and WPA expenditures. Old Age Assistance, Aid to Dependent Children and War Veterans Relief have not been much affected, because of the fact that few of these recipients of these types of relief are able to work. The following figures give comparisons for April 1941 and 1942:

	Direct Relief	WPA	OAA	ADC	W V Relief
No. of cases in 1941 ..	348	573	713	81	35
No. of cases in 1942 ..	229	189	733	94	34
Change .....	—119	—384	+20	+13	—1

The very material drop in WPA and Direct Relief cases is encouraging. The slight change in Old Age Assistance and Aid for Dependent Children and Veterans Relief seems to indicate a continuing need for this type of public assistance.

### What Of The Future

Present war expenditures mounting public debt and the likely difficulties of economic adjustments when the present war is over indicate some very perplexing problems in public finance. No one can see very far ahead or can foresee how the problems will be met. However, a safe guess is that communities and individuals who put their own houses in the best possible order through their own efforts, will be in a safer position for whatever the future offers.

### Need For More Community Responsibility

This job of finding a way to provide for those unable to provide for themselves without an unbearable burden on the rest of the people is one of the most urgent problems for the present and future as well. There is probably no group more directly affected by what is finally done than local community groups.

The present welfare set up has been handled largely as an emergency measure to take care of a serious problem at a very critical time. It is fair to state that most of the urgent need of thousands in distress has been met in a generous and fairly effective way.

### Criticism Is Easy

There has been plenty of criticism. Some of it no doubt is justified. Some of the more common criticism follows.

1. Local people and officials have not been sufficiently used and consulted.
2. Direction as to policies and methods have come mostly from Washington and State sources, often entirely unfamiliar with local conditions and needs.
3. Costs of supervision have been much higher than need be if more local information concerning those in need had been used.
4. Much of the welfare funds have been spent in ways leading to break down of morale and self-confidence of recipients rather than to building up such qualities.



5. The aim has been to help people rather than to help people to help themselves.

Whether or not these criticisms are justified is a matter of personal opinion. However, since indications are that a considerable part of the present welfare expense must continue rather indefinitely, it would seem advisable to take stock at this time and try to insure that the job be well done in the future.

### **Greater Local Participation Desirable**

Welfare is largely a local problem and local effort in conjunction with state and federal effort is most likely to find right answers.

Itasca County has plenty of low priced land that will produce food and many other contributions to family living. It has low cost fuel and building materials. These resources coupled with a reasonable amount of human energy will provide most of the major needs of all local people. The job is to find a way to utilize all these resources to the best advantage of all concerned. This is a real challenge to local, county and township groups. How may the needy in the county be best cared for, contribute what they are able to contribute themselves, receive from the more fortunate what they cannot provide for themselves, and still not be an unnecessary burden on those who are struggling to make their own way?

It would seem that there must be some relationship between this problem and the intelligent use of the thousands of acres of wild land now in only partial use.

### **Other Material Discussed At Educational Meetings**

#### **State Laws Promote Handling Land**

When land is forfeited for taxes and becomes public property, some public agency must be authorized by law to handle it. In Itasca County 90% ownership is held by local taxing units. Because of this large local ownership management of the land is delegated largely to local officials.

#### **County Commissioners And Township Boards Are Responsible**

Chapter 328, Minnesota Session Laws of 1939, provides among other things that — All land forfeited to the State **in trust** shall be classified by the COUNTY BOARD of the county in which such lands lie, as conservation or non-conservation land. Such lands may be reclassified from time to time as the county board may deem necessary or desirable.

It provides further that if any such lands are located within the boundaries of any organized township — the classification or reclassification shall first be approved by the TOWN BOARD of such township in so far as the lands located therein are concerned.

#### **Lands Classified As Conservation May Not Be Sold**

Lands classified as conservation lands, unless reclassified as non-conservation, or sold to a governmental subdivision of the state, will be held under the supervision of the county board.

Any parcels of land to be sold shall first be appraised by county commissioners and such parcels may be reappraised when deemed necessary. Provided, value of land and any standing timber thereon shall be separately determined and provided further, that before any parcel of land is sold the appraised value of timber thereon if any shall first have been approved by the commissioner of conservation. The law provides that the land may be sold at not less than appraised price and offered at auction and sold to the highest bidder. Land may be sold on terms determined by county commissioners. If sold on terms, at least 10% shall be cash and the balance in not to exceed ten years and interest at 4% on unpaid balance. No timber may be removed until full appraised value of such timber has been paid.

### **Timber And Hay Stumpage May Be Sold**

The county auditor may sell hay stumpage on tax forfeited land and may lease conservation and non-conservation lands as directed by county board and may sell dead, down, and mature timber on any tract that may be designated by Conservation Commissioner. The auditor shall apply proceeds of such sale of hay stumpage, lease of land, or sale of timber in the same manner as if the parcel had been sold.

### **How Income From Land Shall Be Distributed**

The net proceeds from the sale or rental of any parcel of land or from the sale of any products therefrom shall be apportioned by the county auditor to the taxing districts interested therein, as follows:

(a) Such portion as may be required to discharge any special assessment chargeable against such parcel for drainage or other purpose, whether due or deferred at the time of forfeiture, shall be apportioned to the municipal subdivision entitled thereto.

(b) Such portion of the remainder as may have been theretofore levied on said parcel of land for any bond issue of the School District, Township, City, Village, or County wherein said parcel of land is situated shall be apportioned to said municipal subdivisions in the proportion of their respective interest.

(c) Any balance remaining shall be apportioned as follows: State 10%; County 30%; Township, Village or City 20%; and School District 40%.

### **What Shall Be Done With Tax Forfeited Land**

One of the most common beliefs, when large acreages of land are forfeited or otherwise taken off the tax rolls, is that the proper procedure is to sell it and get it back on the tax rolls. There are several very good reasons why this is not the right answer.

1. After many years of experience in farming in Northeastern Minnesota, settlers now on the land realize that much of the land in this part of the state is not suitable for farming. While there is much good farm land as demonstrated by the fact that many thousands of farmers have good farms and are doing well on them, there is still much swamp land, hilly, rough, or stony land, and much land that is so sandy and light that it is not profitable to farm. There is also much land so isolated from roads and schools that settlement at present is not feasible.

2. Itasca County has been in the process of development for about 50 years. In this 50 years 16% of all land in the county has been occupied as farm land. This means that if settlement can continue in the future at the same rate that it has in the past, it would take about 250 years to completely settle the county.

3. Another reason why it is impossible to sell a lot of this cutover timber land is that there are evidently enough farms already developed in the U. S. to furnish all of the farm products normally needed. This is evidenced by the fact that during the last 20 years there has been a decrease in value of about 60% on farm land generally throughout the U. S. It costs considerable in labor and money to clear much of the land in Northeastern Minnesota. In many cases the cost of clearing, under present labor conditions, is more than the land is worth after it is cleared.

4. Another reason that makes it difficult to sell a lot of wild land is that many partially or wholly developed farms in this area can be purchased for less than the cost of improvement now on the land.

### **Results Of Haphazard Settlement**

In the past people have been allowed, and in fact encouraged to settle on land anywhere in Northeastern Minnesota without regard to quality of soil or location. As a result, settlement is scattered. Some of the handicaps of scattered settlement are not only the personal inconveniences of settlers in being far from neighbors and markets, but it adds greatly to the normal cost for road and school services. For example, in a well-settled Southern Minnesota community, 3 to 5 settlers will be found on a mile of road. In Northeastern Minnesota settlement probably does not average more than one settler per mile. In many instances several miles of additional road are required for one isolated settler and school costs, particularly where transportation is provided, are excessively high.

Now that control of land has been placed in the hands of local people who are most directly interested in and affected by the handling of land and in view of the fact that it is not probable that much of this wild land can be sold for farming purposes in the near future, it would seem the part of wisdom for local people who know much about their community, due to past experience, to so classify and handle their land, that only good land for farming will be offered for sale and only when this land is so located that the taxpayers of the community can afford to furnish road and school service.

### **Two Guides In Classifying Land**

There are at least two practical questions each township committee may well ask before recommending the sale of a tract

of land for farming. (1) Is this land good enough, soil, location, and cost of clearing considered, so we would want one of our own sons to buy it and develop it into a farm; (2) Is this land so located that we as taxpayers are willing to furnish the owner road and school service.

At each educational meeting after full discussion of the land use problems of Itasca County, each group was asked whether or not they deemed it advisable to proceed to classify land in the county and plan for its best use. Unanimous approval was given at every meeting, and each township group represented asked that their Town Board in organized townships and a selected committee in unorganized townships meet at a later time and proceed to classify land and make recommendations.

### Work And Recommendations Of Township Committees

All townships have since held township committee meetings and classified all the land in Itasca County. Every 40 acres in the county has been classified by these local committees on the basis of their judgment as to its best use.

### County Land Classification Map

A large county map showing the classification of land as made by township committees has been prepared. This map is too cumbersome and too costly to reproduce to include in this report. Copies will be on file in the County Auditor's Office, and also in the County Agent's Office. Each county commissioner will have a copy for his district.

Each township committee will have a copy of their township classification map.

For this report the following graph and explanation shows the acres and percentage of land placed in each class for the county as a whole.

### GRAPH V—CLASSIFICATION OF LAND IN ITASCA COUNTY



Graph No. 5: Shows results in acres and percentage of this classification. Land has been classified in seven classes as follows:

	Acres	Percent
Class 1: Land now in farms and recommended for farm use .....	283,445	16.4
Class 2: Wild land recommended for sale for farms .....	103,892	6.0
Class 3: Land now in farms, but of questionable value for farming .....	8,418	.5
Class 4: Wild land questionable for farming, and recommended for sale only to adjoining land owners .....	88,883	5.2

Class 5: Land now in farms, but because of poor quality of soil and location unfit for farming .....	5,655	.3
Class 6: Wild land best used for the present for conservation .....	1,214,832	70.0
Class 7: Land in towns and villages (not classified) .....	28,371	1.6
TOTAL .....	<u>1,733,496</u>	<u>100.0</u>

### Discussion Of Classification

The first reaction one gets to this classification of land is more or less of a shock, particularly to those who have believed that most of the land in Itasca County would be developed and used for farms. When one sees that the settlers themselves have set aside 1,214,832 acres or 70% of all the land as unsuited for farms at present, it makes the picture look blue. On the other hand, when one thinks of what has been accomplished in the past and what are reasonable probabilities for the future, he will agree with the township committees that this proposed use of land is probably the best possible recommendation that can be made for the time being.

### Plenty Of Land For Immediate Settlement

The 104,000 acres now recommended for sale for farms and the 88,000 acres of questionable land recommended for sale to adjoining owners will, if the rate of settlement actually accomplished in the last 50 years is continued, provide all the land that can be sold for farming purposes in the next 20 to 30 years.

The careful selection of land to be sold for farms on the basis of quality of soil and location means that future settlement will be concentrated in and around the areas that are at present fairly well settled. In this way every additional settler will be an asset to the community in which he settles. If all the land were left open and new settlers were allowed to go back from present road and school facilities, many new settlers would be handicapped themselves, and would be a liability to the community rather than an asset. The fact that 70% of the land has been designated as not to be used for farms for the present, does not mean that it is lost or cannot be used later when and if there is sufficient demand for land to warrant extending the present settled areas.

### Other Recommendations By Township Committees

This land use study was conducted rapidly because of the short time available between the time the work could be started and the usual time when roads break up in the spring. For that reason most of the township committees had only time to complete the classification of land and no time to consider other

things pertaining to the use of land. Twenty township committees, however, did find time to consider other things.

In answer to the question — What public agency should administer land set aside for conservation? — nineteen committees divided their recommendations as follows:

- 10—State Department of Conservation.
- 6—U. S. Forest Service.
- 2—Itasca County Board.
- 1—Township Board.

### **Zoning Law**

A recent state law permits County Commissioners and Township Boards to zone land, that is, restrict the uses to which it may be put. This places with officials a large measure of control over both public and private land. It gives them authority to control settlement within reasonable limits, and thus discourage a private owner or speculator from selling land for agricultural use where its occupancy and use will cause hardship to the purchaser and unreasonable local costs for roads and school.

Nineteen of the twenty township committees questioned with regard to zoning, expressed themselves as favorable.

Note: April 22, 1942, (64) township officers met in Grand Rapids and spent considerable time considering zoning, and voted unanimously that this be done.

### **Land Exchange Law**

Now that a plan of settlement has been pretty well worked out for the next few years in Itasca County, another law that may be used for bettering local conditions is the Land Exchange Law. Township committees have shown that 60 to 80 families are now unfavorably located on 5,655 acres of land. Through use of the Land Exchange Law, and other means, many of these poorly located settlers may be offered opportunities for exchanging their poorly located land for better land better located. This will probably mean an average saving in road and school costs of \$100 or more per year for each of these settlers. By directing new settlement into the desirable farming areas where there is already considerable settlement, and where roads and schools are now available, farm settlements will be consolidated and costs per farm for public services will be materially reduced. Settlers will be benefitted both by reduced taxes and the opportunity of living in better settled communities with better roads, better schools, and better opportunities for many modern conveniences, such as telephones, electric lights, markets, etc. Ten township committees expressed the belief that their townships would be benefitted by use of this land exchange law.

## **Handling Timber Land**

Township committees in classifying land in Itasca County designated 1,215,000 acres in the county as best used for some time to come in a production of timber and other conservation uses. While nearly all of the original crop of timber has been harvested, there is still much timber of marketable size and much more is growing. Most of this new crop of timber is jack-pine and aspen, which is of a lower quality than the original crop of white and Norway pine. Under present market conditions these less valuable varieties of timber represent important income producing possibilities. In fact, it is probable that this second crop of timber will mean more to Itasca County people during the next 50 years than they realized from the original crop of higher quality timber. For this reason, the careful handling of this large acreage of conservation land is of considerable importance to Itasca County.

During the educational meetings, experiences of other counties who forfeited land several years earlier than did Itasca County, were discussed. It was pointed out that several other counties, without carefully considering the matter, assumed that the quick sale of tax forfeited land with a view to getting something out of the sale of land and to get the land back on the tax rolls was desirable and sold much of the land as soon as there was a demand for it. Experiences in these counties have generally been that the purchasers slashed off standing timber and then lost interest in the land, quit paying taxes, and much of it is now in the process of being forfeited again.

With this experience from other counties, 20 of the township committees, who had time to consider the matter, were asked for recommendations as to how timber sales on land designated as conservation land should be handled. Seventeen of the 20 township committees made recommendations as follows: (1) That land they have colored green for conservation use should not be sold; (2) Ownership of this land should be retained by the public; (3) When timber is ready to be cut, stumpage only should be sold; and (4) That the requirement should be made that timber harvested on this land must be cut under good forest practice.

It is evident that the aims of these recommendations are to avoid any liability for public services by selling such land and to so harvest the present crop of timber that another crop may be secured in the shortest possible time.

## **Lake Shore Property**

Itasca County has many very fine lakes. The county now has many summer homes and tourist camps and resorts. This is a good use of land and should be encouraged. Township committees colored most of this lake shore property green, meaning that this land is not suitable for farming. Township

committees generally approve the use of this lake shore property for summer homes and summer resorts so far as it can be profitably used. However, they recognize that scattered settlement of lake shore property may be quite as expensive to local tax payers as scattered settlement of farm land.

Where ever enough lake shore property can be used to justify the services required, it would seem desirable for the county to offer such tax forfeited land for sale, but scattered settlement in this regard should be discouraged.

When zoning is undertaken, it may be advisable to establish partially restricted areas on many of the lakes where summer use and occupancy will be encouraged and fair summer time roads will be furnished, but where winter residence requiring year around roads and school service will be discouraged. This matter is at least of sufficient importance to be worthy of careful consideration.

### **Work Still To Be Done**

This land use study, while helpful in pointing out present conditions, resources, and problems in Itasca County, is merely a beginning of land use work in the county. Some of the main problems apparent in the county may be listed as follows:

1. Small percentage of land in farms.
2. Large number of farms with too few crop acres.
3. Cost of clearing land.
4. Scattered settlement.
5. High cost of public service.
6. High land taxes in proportion to income.
7. Relatively high welfare costs.
8. Problems connected with the handling of a vast acreage of conservation land.

While federal and state agencies may be of some help in dealing with these problems, the main hope for Itasca County is in the initiative, wisdom, enthusiasm and hard work of her own people.

### **County Committee Recommendations**

In recognition of the problems pointed out by this study and in the hope of following up this study with some definite local action, the county land use committee recommends that a second series of meetings be held throughout the county in the near future, at which meetings the classification of land and other recommendations made by the township committee be considered and discussed. The committee evidently believes that by getting the greatest possible number of local citizens in Itasca County to realizing what the problems are and to try to work out solutions the more progress may be made.



## Itasca County Resources

This study so far has largely emphasized the problems of the county. All who know the county realize that there are many available assets and that this study and the actions proposed for the future offer to Itasca County people and other who may come into the county a fairly hopeful future.

Past experience has shown that farming has been and may be profitably conducted on the better land in the county particularly on farms of reasonable size and with a reasonable number of crop acres. Good sized farms have been developed here and will be so developed in the future. Experience in recent years proves beyond doubt that other resources of the county have and will continue to yield returns and support many thousands of people. Among these other resources are mining, production of timber, and tourist business. Itasca County really has four major resources, namely, mining, agriculture, tourist business and timber. That these are material sources is amply shown by the following table.

### ITASCA COUNTY LAND RESOURCES

Industries Directly Dependent Upon Land Resources	Estimated Annual Income To Itasca County People
Iron Mining .....	\$5,000,000
Agriculture .....	2,000,000
Timber and Paper .....	1,500,000
Tourist Industry .....	750,000

These land resource industries represent a diversity of opportunity for Itasca county people. All of the industries, with the possible exception of iron mining, offer possibilities for expansion. Many families receive a part of their support from several sources. This diversity of large and basic industries can produce a stability of activity in the county which is impossible in a one-industry area. While Itasca county people face many perplexing problems in land use, intelligent and courageous use of its great natural resources promises a more abundant future for the people of Itasca county.