

RURAL ELECTRIFICATION DRIVE

Electricity is nationalised! The British Electricity Authority takes over the wide grid system which lights and warms the cities and drive the countless motors in their factories. Ahead lies its greatest task, to carry into every corner of the countryside the labour-saving gift of electricity.

Mechanisation works the fields, but in and around the farm buildings one hundred and fifty thousand farmers must still employ the methods of a bygone age.

Hand milking is but one of the many jobs which draws heavily on the high-skilled labour of the farm worker. Scores of machines are manually operated and young life still comes in by the light and flame of the oil lamp.

The villages which house producers of our nations food have few of the amenities regarded as a right by the town dweller. The oil shop of the days of George the Fourth survives into the reign of George the Sixth. Around it centres the whole life of the community, for oil provides the light and heat of the village hall, the light and heat for cooking in the home. The over-burdened housewife of this post-war age is still cursed by the messy chores her grandmother detested.

In England today electricity reaches one farm in every two over this central strip, one farm in every three over the second shaded portion. In Devon and Cornwall one farm in every eight. Great areas exist completely undeveloped.

Now the Electricity Authority takes over. What will its record be? Three thousand five hundred farms were electrified last year by the private companies and the farmers. One hundred and fifty thousand farms await supply.

Equipment is long in delivery, for Experts come first. Manpower is never plentiful, but the job to be done aims to save manpower. Each ton of food grown on a British farm will ease the need to export. As each farm is connected to the wires, labour is saved to turn to growing food. Each power-station plays its part in replacing the labour of the German prisoners returned now to their own country. As the switch is pressed inside the new wired buildings, each farmer gains another hand.

The power bearing poles creep outward, all too slowly. The countryman, urged to produce the last ounce of food his land will grow, awaits the tools! If there's to be more beef and lamb, or ham and eggs for breakfast and dairy produce on the table once again, the farmer and his workers must get the help they need to grow the food. Nationalisation faces another test, for a way to plenty is the power line which reaches out over the hills.