

parts because of the difficulty of finding new equipment, and repair is made impossible without parts. In Alberta, Canada farmers report that tractor prices have risen dramatically because of the shortage.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's recent report on Agricultural Finance shows a devastating fall in the amount of credit made available in 1974 by farm machinery manufacturers to retailers for loans to farmers. Loans supplied dropped from \$1.3 billion in 1972 to only \$881 million in 1974 despite the 20 per cent rise in tractor prices.

TRACTORS NEEDED TO STOP ECOLOGICAL HOLOCAUST

Jan. 5 (IPS)--At its historic year-end conference Dec. 28 and 29, the U.S. Labor Party embarked on an international campaign to massively expand food production and create new jobs by reconverting idled auto capacity to tractor production, increasing fertilizer production, and a crash program to develop nuclear fusion power.

The initiation of this massive program of expanding tractor, truck, and agricultural implement production through conversion of idle auto industry plant and through the construction of additional new plants is not by any means a "make-work" solution to the problem of mass unemployment. On the contrary, the working class must move immediately to mechanize agriculture if mass starvation and an ensuing ecological holocaust of epidemics and death are to be avoided.

In expanding food production to meet the already critical needs of both the starving millions of the Third World, especially in Sahelian Africa and the Indian subcontinent, and the need for increased nutritional levels in the advanced countries, we must focus on those means which will most rapidly expand food production globally, and then supply the food to those areas in greatest immediate need. In this way, we will gain time to implement more complete expansion in areas where greater inputs are needed. The key to this whole process is the increasing of yields through mechanization of agriculture, including the expansion of fertilizer production and the rapid increase of land area under cultivation.

Tractors for Advanced Sector

The areas which can most immediately contribute to expansion of food production lie in the already developed countries, whose farmers are best educated and most ready to handle mechanized agricultural technology. Advanced sector economies also have the general infrastructure capable of supporting such technology. On this basis, the major areas in need of immediate tractor inputs are the United States and Canada, Southern and Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and Australia. Northwest Europe and Japan,

although advanced areas, are already nearly fully equipped with tractors and other inputs of mechanized agriculture.

Based on research already completed by the U.S. Labor Party, the tractor needs of these sectors can be estimated. In the United States, to bring into production an additional 100 million acres of good land now lying fallow, about 1.5 million new tractors will be needed. Similarly, for Eastern and Southern Europe, to bring these areas of fertile soil but labor-intensive agriculture to the levels of maximum yield another 2.5 million tractors and associated equipment will be necessary. By far the largest immediate potential for expanding agricultural production, and thus the largest immediate necessity for mechanization, lies in the Soviet Union, where six million tractors, one million combines, and three million new trucks are necessary.

Rapid Food Increase

On the basis of these inputs of some 10 million new tractors and other equipment, together with necessary expansion of fertilizer production, production of vital grains in the Soviet bloc countries alone could be tripled, adding 400 million tons per year to total world production and completely eliminating starvation and gross malnutrition worldwide through massive exports to food-deficit areas. Together with the contributions of Southern Europe, Australia, and the United States and Canada, more than 600 million tons of grain, an increase of nearly 50 per cent in world production, would be possible. Crude estimates indicate that such an expansion in the number of tractors, trucks, and combines could be produced in about two years if 50 per cent of U.S. and Western European auto production were converted over to agricultural inputs.

Obviously, this is not quickly enough, especially when it is considered that the production of nearly 150 million tractors will be needed to similarly mechanize the entire world's agricultural production and supply an optimal diet to the entire world population. To accomplish this task, massive new production of tractor factories and massive expansion of the workforce in tractor, truck, and fertilizer production is essential.

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT SABOTAGES FOOD PRODUCTION

Jan. 2 (IPS)--Informed sources in the Canadian Department of Agriculture stated today that ten million bushels of wheat, barley, and oats are being stored as "reserve" feedgrains in Thunder Bay, Ontario. In a related move aimed at sabotaging Canadian food production, yesterday the Canadian government imposed a 30 per cent freight increase for slaughtered meat and other foodstuffs. Provincial government officials are warning that the rate increase will wipe out many livestock farmers, further decimating the