

FARMS FOR SOLDIERS.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING

REPORTS FROM ARMY OFFICIALS SHOWING THE INTEREST OF THE
SOLDIERS IN THE PLAN NOW BEFORE CONGRESS TO PROVIDE
THEM WITH FARMS ON THE UNUSED LANDS OF THE COUNTRY.

AUGUST 1, 1919.—Referred to the Committee on the Public Lands and ordered
to be printed.

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, July 31, 1919.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Having been asked by committees of both Houses what evidence there was that the soldiers, sailors, and marines engaged in the war with Germany were interested in the plan before Congress for providing them with farms upon the unused lands of the country, I sent the following letter to the officers ranking above captain still in the service whose addresses I could procure:

As you doubtless know, this department is urging upon Congress a large appropriation for the development of some of the unused lands of the country by soldiers and sailors and for them. (The plan is explained in rough outline in the inclosed pamphlets.) It would, I know, be of much value to Congress if I could have for their benefit an expression of your feeling as to the advisability of providing such farm homes for the men who have come back and soon will be back.

The impression has been spread abroad that the men would not care to go on farms. The answer to that appears to be in the fact that 40,000 have already written to us of their interest in the plan. From many officers and men who have returned from France and from others in this country, I have gained the very firm impression that this form of employment and of making a livelihood will make an especial appeal to our men. Am I wrong in this? Would you mind giving me your opinion as to whether this is a worth-while line of activity for the Government to now undertake in view of the unemployment situation and the desirability of having our men tied to the land by the sentiment that always develops when one owns a bit of the soil and works in it?

I shall respect any desire you may express as to treating what you say as confidential.