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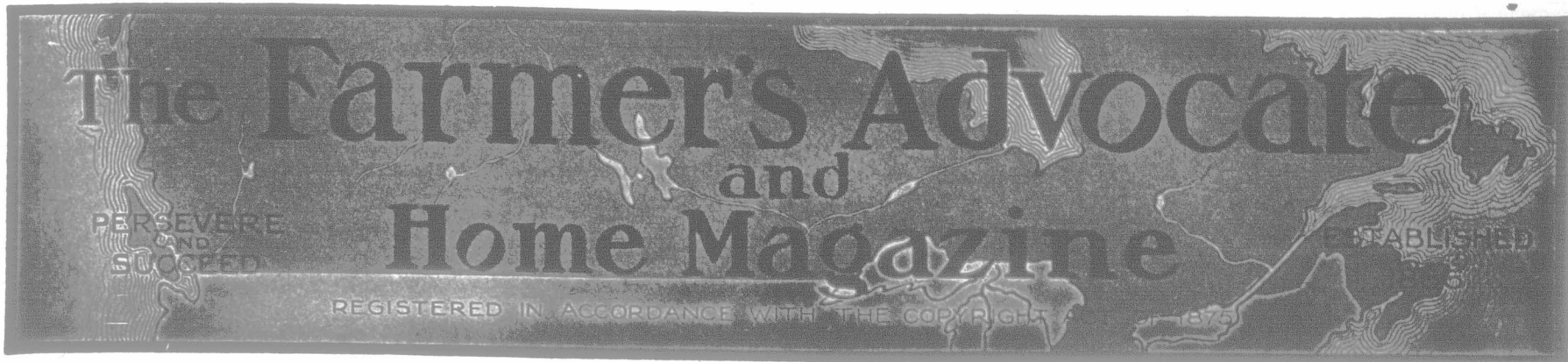
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VOL. XLVIII.

LONDON, ONTARIO, OCTOBER 9, 1913.

No. 1071

EDITORIAL

One of these days Prince Edward Island will be changing its lion and group of trees on its coat of arms to a wire fence and a black fox.

If everybody is determined to live in town and work at what they think is a genteel and easy-money job, the cost of living ought naturally to soar.

Rural depopulation is no new topic. In his book on "What I Know About Farming", in 1871 Horace Greely devoted a chapter to the then worrying theme.

Improved road construction without an efficient system of road maintenance involves a waste of public money, and throws discredit upon the movement for better highways.

How to get people to want to live on the land is the crux of the rural-population problem, and it suggests some fresh lines of attitude and action by parents, public school teachers, the press, the pulpit, and legislators who have to do with taxation, transport, and public generally.

In these days we hear a great deal about educating the man on the land, and, after all, we sometimes wonder whether more knowledge of agriculture is what is needed or living more closely up to what we already know. Most people recognize the good things, but few practice them as they should.

The Wilson administration in the United States is said to be conducting a quiet investigation to solve the problems of the producer and consumer, and to unite them to adjust all producing and marketing methods. If the producers would do their own marketing and consumers their own purchasing, it would help some. By this we do not mean that each producer should carry his own produce to the consumer's door, nor that the consumers should go to the farm and purchase it individually. Why not market on a large scale collectively—co-operatively, and why not the consumers purchase on a large scale collectively—co-operatively? A little of the "get-together" spirit would do a lot of good.

Practical experience is the best teacher. A certain United States chairman of a State commission for prison reform, has decided to serve a self-imposed sentence to study the effect of discipline, food, labor and the prison system on the mind of an inmate. We wonder how a few years plowing, sowing, reaping and mowing, rising early and working late during rush seasons, getting along with about one-half the necessary labor, paying the other fellow's price in buying articles required on the farm, and selling farm products for what the buyer is willing to pay, not making life a drudgery but working hard at honest, bodily labor every day of the year, would affect the mind of the man who has always been an urban dweller, living in comparative ease, but perpetually growling that the only man who has a "snap" is the farmer. Things often have a vastly different appearance from the inside looking out than from the outside looking in.

Who Should Produce Beef?

A delegate to the American Meat Packers' Association, in Chicago September 23rd, advocated rather strong measures to overcome the possibility of a meat famine in the United States. He suggested stocking the government lands with cattle and putting the regular soldiery, particularly the cavalry, to work as cowboys. Only by the most drastic action did he believe a meat famine in about six or eight years could be averted. The government lands in the Western States, he believed, could be made into pastures where countless cattle could be raised to relieve the present high cost of meat, and avert the famine that he believed is sure to come otherwise. "Unless some such action is taken," he predicted, "there will be no meat on the tables of American workmen in the next decade." He was sure that his scheme would greatly lower prices, as the army could first be supplied and then meat sold for the tables of the people generally.

Rather radical regulations for the rejuvenation of an industry of the magnitude of that of cattle breeding. What would the millions of individual cattle raisers and feeders, who help to maintain the soldiery, think of such a project, which, in the end, could not but rob them of their chosen calling? Cattle raising and feeding is one of the basic branches of farming operations, and if government lands were used to raise and feed "countless" cattle to be sold at a nominal or very low price, it could have no other effect than to drive more of the men now producing good cattle to other branches of agriculture or away from the land entirely. The individual could not hope to compete with a government whose funds are practically unlimited, and which secured its labor for attending the cattle for nothing. The labor required would not cost the Government a cent, as they have to pay the soldiery any way. Let the farmer quit raising or feeding cattle or some other class of stock, and where does his farm go? Soil fertility wanes, and the land brings forth less abundantly year after year. The farmer tries new undertakings with which he is less familiar, and more failures result or he sinks into a "laissez-faire" condition taking all things as they come, and makes no progress towards his own or his country's betterment. Why is meat so high in price at the consumer's door to-day? Largely because, at the lower prices which formerly obtained for it, the producer, under the changing conditions, which have led up to the present state of affairs, could not make beef at as high a profit as was possible from other branches of his calling. Consequently the number of beef cattle bred gradually showed a falling off. Now that prices are higher and there is a demand for stockers, feeders and finished cattle, the proper thing to do seems to be to encourage breeders and feeders to renew their efforts towards beef production rather than to take the greater part of this business out of their hands. It would not be a good thing for beef to get so high in price that the working men could not afford to eat it. We want as many consumers of good beef as possible, not only because it creates a demand but also because good beef is a wholesome food, well suited to nourish strong, rugged men with brain as well as brawn. There is something to be said in favor of putting the soldiery to work, but could they not do better work for themselves than on government ranches in soldiers' uniforms? Let them beat their swords into branding irons, and their spears into cattle chains and stanchions, and with judicious

government encouragement put beef raising on such a basis that the producer is assured of a profit sufficiently large to warrant his remaining in the business, and the consumer can afford to have beef for his table as often as he desires.

Finishing the Cattle.

It may require some courage to do it this season, but, nevertheless, it is surely advisable in the long run to finish all animals to be sold off the farm rather than dispose of them half-fat or poorly fitted. This applies to all farm stock from poultry to horses. How many people sell their chickens "off the stubble" half-fat and not in a condition to command the top price? How many, if they have a horse to sell, turn him over at a comparatively small figure to the dealer to finish and make a handsome profit, which might just as well have gone down into the owner's pocket had he put a little fat on the horse before offering him? How many pigs are sold as "shoots" for someone else to finish? The other fellow must make a profit on finishing, otherwise he could not continue in the business. Many are the grade lambs sold each year to new owners to fatten for market, and last winter saw a big turnover in this business alone. But it is neither cockerels nor geldings—neither shoots nor wethers which is uppermost in the minds of the feeder and drover at the present time. It is cattle—not so much finished cattle, but stockers and feeders, particularly the latter.

Our markets have been invaded by buyers from across the border, and thousands of feeders have gone to the United States. Prices rule high—up to over \$6.00 per hundred. There is a great temptation for those holding a number of good yearling, two-year-old or three-year-old feeders to let them go when the price runs up so high. No one can blame a cattleman for trying to make the most out of his business. But unless the feed grown and originally intended to feed these steers is used to feed some class of stock on the farm, what is going to become of the farm? A bank account cannot be withdrawn and the depositor still have the same amount to his credit, neither can a soil be depleted of plant food, through crops harvested, and the deposit of these materials held therein remain large enough to annually ensure maximum production. In the end the farm must suffer unless the plants harvested are consumed and returned in large measure to the soil through animal manure. It is well known that the fattening animal returns nearly all the plant food in the faeces.

"The Farmer's Advocate" has always stood for the finishing of all classes of live stock on the farms of this country. Prices are high this fall for stockers and feeders, and the man with a goodly supply of these could likely make a nice profit by selling them now, but could he not make even higher returns by fattening them on his own place? Let him weigh carefully the value of the manure, the opportunity to keep labor by the year which is the only best means of hiring farm labor, the chance to profitably utilize a large amount of cheap, rough feed which would otherwise waste, and the chance to obtain a high price for the choice finished animal ready to go on any butcher's block and command a quick sale at the highest price.

We are not prophets, but all signs point to high-priced beef and to the man who has raised a number of feeders, unless he is situated on grazing land only, the greatest opportunity seems