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EDITORIAL

Early Ripening

Those who have been prone to brand the Canadian West as a land of ice and snow, fit only for polar bears and Eskimos, should take note of the fact that in 1910 that season's wheat was on the market in Winnipeg on the first day of August—also that it brought over one dollar a bushel. On the above mentioned date a farmer at Rosenfeld, Man., delivered wheat from Manitoba's 1910 crop, grading No. 1 Northern. The grade indicates that it was not hastened to early maturity by untoward hot winds.

This record for early ripening is only another proof that the wheat belt is advancing northward. It also gives weight to the argument that in a few years Western Canada will be included in the corn belt.

Who can forespeak the possibilities of prairie Canada?

Canada's Poultry Industry

If anything can be done to improve conditions in connection with Canada's poultry industry the men in charge of the Poultry Producers' Association now working in Ontario and Quebec promise to do it. A couple of weeks ago representatives of this organization met the Minister of Agriculture for Canada and made several recommendations intended to assist in handling flocks, treating diseases and marketing the products of the poultry yard. A strong point was made in regard to co-operation in marketing, and changes were suggested in the Dominion department of agriculture that would result in closer attention being paid to poultry interests.

There does not seem to be anything unreasonable in the suggestions as given on another page of this issue. One thing that cannot well be denied is a special officer to superintend the work. Whether this officer is appointed as a poultry commissioner or in charge of the

poultry branch under the live stock commissioner makes little difference, as long as the live stock commissioner is in sympathy with the movement and willing to give his subordinate a free hand in doing progressive work. An independent commissioner would, of course, be more desirable. Indications are that some forward step will be taken and that the poultry industry will receive greater attention than it has in the past.

Farm Help Requirements

Although the demand for farm help does not promise to be as urgent as it was in 1909 there will be a call for thousands of hands between now and the end of the month. The eagerness to garner a big crop as quickly as possible necessitates an increase over the number of men used in putting in seed, looking after summerfallows and other details during early summer.

Already several requests for hired help have reached the authorities. Thought of disappointment on former occasions has induced some to act early—to make application and to engage hands while they are available. The progressive farmer as a rule avers that it is not wise to wait until the work is on before provision is made to cope with it. The man who secures his helpers early and makes needed repairs to machinery and harness, who has everything in readiness for straight work with strong horses and intelligent and able men, is the one who each year announces that his acres are profitable. The loss of one hour means bushels on a big farm and the loss of a day may result in serious damage by frost or other means. It is not wise to decrease the pay to hired help by a few dollars or to neglect much-needed repairs, and then lose many bushels of valuable grain because it is found impossible to harvest it at the proper time.

Secure the helpers early and make preparations for the big job of the year—the one that means profit or loss.

Marvellous Varieties!

Judging from newspaper despatches the Canadian West each year can boast of a dozen or more varieties of wheat that promise to revolutionize wheat growing on the great productive prairies. Some of them are marvellous—on paper. It is strange to note, however, that despite this annual bombardment of extra specials Red Fife still stands as the king of wheats. Nevertheless it is just possible that some time in the dim and distant future a variety will become sufficiently prominent to shake the faith of the common grain growers in their old favorite. In fact, it would be strange if such did not come to pass. Plant breeders have developed the production of varieties to a science. Some day they will

have a wheat that will outstrip Red Fife in quality or yield, or perhaps in both. The trouble so far has been that varieties that gave bigger returns fell short in point of quality. Moreover the wheat grower of the Canadian prairies knows that quality in Red Fife has brought this land to the front as a producer of this cereal and he is loth to drop it.

For the immediate future prospects are brighter for improved strains of Red Fife than they are for new varieties. Even with these, however, there generally are deficiencies that come to light when a genuine test extending over a term of years is made.

Every farmer will do well to investigate the merits of new varieties or improved strains. Give them a fair trial on equal footing with good seed of the variety of your choice. If, after an intelligent trial, they fill the bill and give bigger annual profits, adopt the best for main crop.

Responsibility for Hog Values

A reader in Manitoba writes us regarding his experience raising hogs. The burden of his remarks is that hogs do not pay, and that the wise farmer will take advantage of the present fairly good prices for live hogs to get rid of his breeding stock and go out of business. He figures that it cost him last winter \$8.33 to produce 100 pounds of pork, which he sold at his local shipping point for \$7.25 to \$7.50 per hundred, or a net loss of 83 cents per hundred pounds. This gentleman sizes up the high prices of the past year as a trick on the part of the packers to get farmers back into the hog business again, that they, the farmers, may be "skinned" once more, and concludes with the highly interesting statement "that supply and demand have little to do with prices; it is the game that is played. Watch it."

All of which goes to show that figures may be made to prove almost anything, and that it is as easy to prove to one's own satisfaction that supply and demand have nothing to do with the making of price as it is to show that they have.

We are convinced that the gentleman in question estimates the cost of production too high. For instance he has 18-pound shoats marked up to \$5.00 each. If 18-pound pigs could be sold for five dollars a piece, which is approximately 28 cents per pound, we would never undertake to feed them. The first 18 pounds of a pig's weight is made more cheaply than the last 50 pounds, and if he can be sold then for practically four times the price per pound he will be worth when mature, let him go if anybody can be found sufficiently infatuated with the profit-making possibilities of the hog-feeding business to exchange a five-dollar bill for him.

Space here does not permit of an exhaustive