

FARM AND DAIRY

AND RURAL HOME
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The Rural Publishing Company, Ltd.
PETERBORO, ONT.

"Read not to contradict and to confute, nor to believe and take for granted, but to weigh and consider."—Isaac.

More Silos Needed

THE gradual decrease in the acreage devoted to root crops, and the rapid increase in the amount of land used for fodder corn production, shows that farmers generally follow the line of least resistance and apply their labor where it will bring them the greatest returns. The necessity of succulent feed for winter is recognized, the only question being, whether corn or roots, the two main sources of such feeds, will supply the greatest amount of it for the least labor. It is now generally recognized that corn silage is the most economical source of succulence. Although roots have a place and will always be grown to a considerable extent, still it is practically certain that the acreage devoted to corn will continue to rapidly increase.

The scarcity of labor that prevails at the present time is a strong inducement for swinging over still further to corn production. The men who already have ample silo capacity are in the best possible position to get along with a minimum of labor. Those who have not yet built silos could probably not put their time to better advantage than to build one this summer, as there is no prospect of relief in the labor situation for some time to come. To increase or even maintain production of food stuffs, every known labor-saving device will have to be utilized. Away up near the top of the list of labor-saving devices is the silo. We in Canada are only beginning to realize the value of silos, and there is urgent need that their numbers be increased as rapidly as possible.

A Field for Public Service

ONE of the benefits of direct legislation is that it gives an opportunity for public minded citizens to interest themselves in the initiation of progressive legislation, and to devote some of their time to public welfare. Under our system of so-called representative gov-

ernment, law making is left entirely in the hands of the members of legislative bodies. That these men hold a monopoly of law making ability no one, not even they themselves, would have the hardihood to claim. There are amongst the great body of private citizens men eminently capable of taking a leading part in devising and promoting beneficial measures. Amongst these are many who for business reasons are unable to devote so large a part of their time to public work as is necessary for men engaged in public life. Under the representative system, these are debarred from taking an active part in the shaping of legislative policies.

That there is a field in which the ability of these men can be utilized for public good, was amply illustrated in the recent temperance propaganda in Ontario. The Committee of One Hundred was composed of public minded private citizens. So thorough and business-like was the propaganda they conducted that the signatures of over 85 per cent. of the voters of the province were secured to the petition for prohibitory liquor legislation. In the campaign was utilized the ability and only the ability, of men who, under ordinary circumstances would have no active part in influencing legislation. Under a liberal measure of direct legislation, however, the field would be continually open for the public spirited activities of such men. There would always be an opportunity for them to give their time for public welfare.

The Farmer and the War

NOW that the rush of spring work has begun in earnest, and with so many of the sons and hired men that we had to help us this time last year, now in training or on the firing line, the temptation is greater than ever to reduce the work put on the land. Even in years when labor was, comparatively speaking, plentiful, the manner in which we did our general spring cultivation was not what it should have been. This year, with the pressure of work greater than ever, there is a grave danger that much of the crop will be sown in a poorly prepared seed bed, and that the result of this lack of cultivation will be reflected in the yields of harvest time.

Though it might be neither wise nor possible to put as much work on the land as is advocated by some intensive farming enthusiasts, still it is easy to err on the other side and to make insufficient preparation for the seeds. Perhaps no farming operation pays greater dividends than an extra stroke of the harrow or disk. Any increased effort at this time will increase the yield without adding much to the work that will be required at any other time during the season. The reward of such effort, both from the extra returns received and from the sense of duty well done, will be great. It should greatly encourage the farmer to know that every ounce of increased effort that he expends in making provision for greater crops will ultimately be registered on the firing line, and that the disk, the harrow and the grain drill are just as effective in a war of exhaustion as the howitzer and the machine gun.

Sisal Monopoly and Twine Prices

EVERY indication points to the probability that farmers will have to pay a high price for their twine this year. The price of sisal, the raw material from which most of our twine is made, is now well over seven cents a pound, or about equal to the wholesale price of the manufactured twine some five years ago. As is usual in such cases, these high prices are the result of a monopoly. It appears that a series of circumstances, including the Spanish-American war, the subsequent revolutions in the Philippines, as well as a severe drought in those islands last year, has so interfered with the supply of sisal from that source, that reliance is now made almost altogether on the province of Yucatan in Mexico for

the supply of raw fibre. The exportation of sisal from that province is a government monopoly, and is financed by American capital. Representing this combination is a regulating committee which practically controls the world's output of fibre, and can set any price it pleases on the product. As a result, prices have advanced rapidly, every advance of one cent per pound, representing an additional \$2,500,000 that the monopoly can extract from the pockets of Canadian and United States farmers.

Since the province of Yucatan is not subject to the government of either Canada or the United States, these countries are helpless in controlling the monopoly, and it is not likely that the monopolists are losing any sleep over the loss they are imposing on our farmers. They are more likely to be planning how to still further increase the price. The only consolation to be found is that the growing of fibre will be stimulated in other parts of the world by the high prices now ruling, with the result that competition and reasonable prices may eventually be restored.

A Successful Experiment in Taxation

THESE are the days of experiments in taxation. The demand for money to meet the large expenditures due to the war has caused Canadian politicians to vie with one another in discovering new methods of raising revenue. Some of the methods devised, however, are far from being above criticism. They are purely expedient, making no pretense of being founded upon scientific principles, their chief characteristic being that they tend to check industry and to place a premium upon dishonesty.

There is, however, at least one exception. Alberta, along with older methods, has been experimenting with land value taxation, and with very gratifying results. In one year that province has collected \$700,000 by means of a tax levied on wild lands. The Calgary Herald, the leading Conservative organ in the province, has recently commented favorably upon this method of raising public revenue, and has strongly urged the extension of the principle of taxing land held from productive use by speculators. The tax has had a double effect, both of which will be looked on with favor by the real producers of wealth, in the sunny province. Not only has \$700,000 been raised without imposing any additional burden on those who are using the land, but it has also had the effect of inducing those who hold wild lands to let go at reasonable prices.

Around all our large cities and in all our new districts are large tracts of land and other valuable resources held from legitimate use for speculative purposes. Our government should not be slow to see that here is a source from which taxes can be raised without checking industry, and that such taxes cannot be evaded or passed on to the productive worker. The success that has attended Alberta's experiment in taxing unused land corroborates the contention of those who believe that the land-hog should not escape the tax collector.

The well-being of a people is like a tree; agriculture is its root; manufacture and commerce are its branches and its leaves; if the root is injured the leaves fall, the branches break away, and the tree dies.—Chinese Philosopher.

Once the corn is off to a good start, we cultivate very shallow. One year we had the crop on the side hill. There was much rain, and all surface earth between the rows washed off. Then there lay exposed a perfect net work of corn roots. They could not have been more than two or three inches below the surface. Anyone who has had such an object lesson as this can easily see the folly of deep cultivation of the corn crop.—Norma Ballantyne, Perth Co., Ont.