

# Farmer's Advocate

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### EDITORIAL

#### Co-operation Helping the Fruit Trade.

The British Columbia fruit growers are wisely adopting an extensive system of co-operation. The fruit trade is peculiar in that it requires the employment of co-operative organizations to make it a success. Between the grower of fruits and the wholesaler, retailer, and consumer, there was, in the past, always a gulf fixed. Before co-operative organizations were general, there were no means of collecting fruit from the growers in wholesale quantities, and placing it in the hands of the wholesale trade, which by the way, exerted most of its energies selling the limited quantities it could get.

Organized co-operation not only effects an economy in gathering fruit into wholesale quantities, but maintains standards of quality and packages, and increases the quantities sold. A case in point is the California Fruit Growers' Exchange: Some eight to ten years ago the growers of oranges in different parts of California were unable to get sale for their fruit, and began cutting down their groves, but about the same time the co-operative idea seized some of the leading spirits, and organization was begun. The first year the exchange was in operation five thousand cars were sold, and in six years time the number has increased to eighteen thousand cars. The growers are receiving fair prices for their oranges, and everyone knows that the consumer never had so many opportunities to buy, nor such long seasons in which to get oranges, nor such low prices, as have existed during the last few years. In time, as great or greater progress will be reported from British Columbia.

From all appearances the increase of sales through the British Columbia exchange should be phenomenal, since the increase will be stimulated by increased production of the orchards and increasing markets on the prairies. To both growers and consumers it should be gratifying to learn that through the co-operative organizations and the exchange, the cost of handling the fruit between growers and consumers has been reduced to a satisfactory level. Further reductions may be made in the future by eliminating the cost of retailing, but it is hardly likely that such will be the case, for while there is still quite a wide margin between the price to the grower and the retail price, the losses in the trade by decay are by no means small.

#### If You Were Frozen

A resident of that part of Saskatchewan which was visited last year with frost and where again, on the evening of the 12th instant, the thermometer went several degrees below freezing point, asks: "What course would you advise in order to make a living in a country where we can raise nothing but frozen grain?"

This is a hard problem. If there were enough mortgage companies to employ all the residents of such a district as inspectors for making loans, we would suggest that occupation as a means of obtaining a livelihood, though not as a path to opulence. It is something of a libel on the country, however, to say it will "raise nothing but frozen grain." Crops of sound grain have been raised in all parts of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta, and besides horses, cattle, hogs and sheep are known to do best in those districts most liable to frost, on account of the nature of the land. Exclusive grain growing in such districts is a perversion of natural laws. Every one who is familiar with pioneering knows that in the early settlements of some districts, especially in valleys in areas that are naturally low lying, or that are at the bottoms of atmospheric drains, it is almost impossible to grow anything except

the most hardy early grains. Time, however, appears to modify climate where cultivation is extensive, and eventually a greater variety of produce can be grown.

In this issue W. I. calls attention to the effect of manure upon the ripening of wheat crops. Personally, we have noticed the same thing, as have also many of our best farmers. It is hardly to be expected though, that we should have wheat ripened and cut by August 12th, or August 9th, the date of last year's frost; but by growing early varieties and using every precaution to assist them to ripen early, one can lessen, to some extent, the danger of frost.

One thing that makes frost-dodging difficult is that one can never tell where the low temperatures are going to obtain. Last year some districts had frost where they never had it before, and when all reports are in we will not be surprised if these districts were frozen again this year, but in those districts where frost is quite prevalent, we would suggest a general and extensive movement towards stock-raising and dairying. It should not be a case of comparing the returns from a dairy or stock farm with the profits from grain farming in another district, or with the money made by speculating in land. It should be remembered that there are men who have applied themselves to this line of farming, and have made it pay even better in some instances than some of the best grain farmers in the best grain growing districts. Nor does stock and dairy farming preclude growing grain for sale, they rather assist it, but if the grain should not be a success, there is always the constant revenue from the other department.

There are many things that interfere with stock and dairy farming, the greatest probably being the lack of desire to go in for it. Everyone dislikes to go into something he had not thought necessary, but there is one master we all obey, "grim necessity" and some day in the very near future, at the instance of this master, there is going to be a demonstration that stock raising, and dairying are not only profitable adjuncts of farming, but the most rational means of keeping farms in shape to grow grain and other crops. When this time comes, there will of course have to be more productive cows kept than the average at present, and the science of stock feeding will require to be better understood.

#### Justice to the Soil

It is certain that few farmers farm as well as they think they should, or as well as they know how. This may be due, in many cases, to circumstances they cannot readily avoid or control, but in most instances they will admit that with more attention to the details of their work, with proper handling of the land, a judicious variation of crops, more attention to making, saving and applying manure, more care in the selection and cleaning of seed, and more regular growing of clover, considerably higher average yields would be ensured, and would probably pay well for the added labor and expense involved. In passing through the country and noticing the difference in the appearance and promise of crops on adjoining farms, evidently equal in quality of soil, one cannot but be impressed with the thought that one has been better farmed than the other, and that the better management will be liberally rewarded in the harvest field.

Mother earth will stand a good deal of abuse, and will give back all the returns of profit that can be reasonably expected from the treatment she receives, and generally will respond generously to generous treatment, but to use a vulgar saying, "One cannot expect blood from a turnip," and land overcropped and starved by lack of fertilizing elements returned, cannot reasonably be expected to yield paying crops. Yet the recuperative properties of average soil are remarkable and exceedingly interesting. Farms are known and being written about which a few years ago were

considered "run out," and beyond hope of recovery because of bad management, and were sold for less than one-half the value of adjoining farms, but by better management, with a little more expenditure of labor and better cultivation, together with the growing of clover and feeding of cattle and other stock, were in a few years restored to fertility, and are regularly producing as bountiful crops as in the early years after being cleared of the forest, when the soil was in its virgin condition.

Some people are unduly concerned about the future of the race of men, when all the farming land of the world has been taken up, and no place will be left for the ever-increasing population, but if they would consider that by more intensive farming the land could be made to produce from two to ten times as much in money value per acre yearly as is now received from the same area, there need be little anxiety about the future. Smaller farms, if need be, better tilled and more intelligently managed, will, as a rule, be found better for all, especially if cottages at a moderate rental, are provided for married help, whose families might find employment on the land and in farm homes. Under such conditions farmers and their wives would not need to work as many are doing, much harder than their strength warrants or their financial circumstances demand, while their profits might readily be increased.

#### Our Increasing Marine Traffic

The water-borne traffic of the Dominion for the year 1907, was the largest on record. The total volume aggregated 20,543,639 tons, as compared with 10,523,185 tons for the preceding year. This represented an increase of 10,020,454 tons, or 95.2 per cent. For the ten year period the increase was 13,925,164 tons, or 210.4 per cent.—which must be regarded as an exceedingly satisfactory result.

The results for the past five years are as follows:

|           |                |
|-----------|----------------|
| 1903..... | 9,203,917 tons |
| 1904..... | 8,256,236 "    |
| 1905..... | 9,371,744 "    |
| 1906..... | 10,523,185 "   |
| 1907..... | 20,543,639 "   |

It may be helpful for comparative purposes, to observe the extent to which the traffic of Canadian railways has grown during the same period:—

|           |                 |
|-----------|-----------------|
| 1903..... | 47,373,417 tons |
| 1904..... | 48,097,957 "    |
| 1905..... | 50,893,957 "    |
| 1906..... | 57,966,713 "    |
| 1907..... | 63,866,135 "    |

During 1907, most of the bumper crop of 1906, was moved across the lakes, but during 1908, the crop of 1907 did not keep the vessels so busy, hence the determination of the vessel owners to raise the rates as reported in the daily press of this month. Throughout the early part of the summer, freight was so scarce that the owners of boats were willing to take practically whatever they could get, so long as they could make up a cargo, but there is no reason to believe that they incurred expense for the pleasure of running their boats. The conclusion, therefore, must be that the increase in the rates for carrying grain which the vessel owners have proposed to go into effect when the new crop begins to move, and which amounts to from fifty to one hundred per cent., is all clear profit.

#### Another Word on the Cattle Trade

A well informed and careful student of the cattle and meat trade of the United States, after an exhaustive study of British and European conditions, made the significant statement that if America, including Canada, is to increase her trade in meat products in the Old World markets, it must be through the live cattle side of the business.

This is not in agreement with the prevailing conviction on this side of the line. We have been given to understand by the bulk of the evidence