

The Ninety-Million Market.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

Is it not time for the apostles of the gospel of free trade and the "ninety-million" market to stop talking vague generalities and get down to facts and details, and show us where and how the farmers, and especially those of Eastern Ontario and Quebec, will benefit by the present reciprocity bill. They might also explain about the abandoned farms of the north-eastern States; there are about 4,500 in Maine alone. Had the bill been brought in last year, there would have been much more to say in its favor, because the price of dairy products in the United States was unusually high, but this spring things went back to their normal condition, and the Old Country is once more our best customer. On this side of the St. Lawrence we have two towns, Prescott and Brockville, with a combined population of about thirteen thousand; on the other side, opposite Prescott, there is Ogdensburg, with about twenty thousand inhabitants. It might be supposed that the latter would afford the better market, even without counting the fact that it has free access to the "ninety million market," but all spring the prices of everything our farmers have to sell have been higher on the Canadian side. In March I receive in Prescott 27 cents per pound for butter-fat, and our nearest cheese factory paid its patrons \$20.47 a ton for their milk, while creameries around Ogdensburg sold their butter at 21 cents. I don't know what the patrons got. Eggs have never gone below 16 cents, wholesale, in Prescott, while the retail price over the river has been from 10 to 15 cents for fresh eggs. The same thing is true of every item, from potatoes to horses, and there is good prospect of this condition continuing for some time to come. There is another side to the question, however. This is a dairy district, and comparatively little grain is grown. On the other hand, we buy large quantities of bran, shorts, and other feeds. Our prices for bran run from \$1.10 to \$1.25 per cwt.; the Ogdensburg prices are from \$1.30 to \$1.50, or higher, and other feed in proportion, except corn, which is already free. Therefore, the Eastern Ontario farmer stands to get less, and to pay more for what he has to buy. Now it is up to the advocates of reciprocity to show how the Canadian will be better off than his neighbor across the line, and how a wider market is to make up for lower prices.

Another point which is persistently ignored by reciprocity boomers is the question of the favored nations. I think there can be no doubt that Messrs. Fielding and Patterson forgot all about those treaties when making their agreement with Taft, and they have fought shy of that point and endeavored to keep it in the background ever since. We have heard a good deal about Russian eggs, and our experience this spring shows that cheap eggs, even if of poor quality, will spoil the price of the best fresh eggs. A few years ago, Danish butter was sold in Montreal cheaper than Canadian, in spite of the duty, and, by-the-by, our cheesemaker tells me it was a shipment of American cheese into Montreal market that made cheese drop one cent in a week a while ago. Argentina is a strong competitor in several lines, and so are other nations which will have free entry if the bill carries—and Canada gets absolutely nothing in return. What the Northwest farmers asked for most earnestly was free agricultural implements, and had they got that, the Eastern farmers would have been with them almost to a man, but the reciprocity bill only makes a feeble pretence at granting their request. The manufacturers can kill the demand for reciprocity by lowering their prices to within a reasonable distance of the United States prices. The manufacturers' side of the case was set out in a long and carefully drawn-up letter which I read in the Montreal Star, and it contained two statements that every farmer knows to be false. These were that the manufacturers did not add the duty to the American price to make the Canadian price, and that prices had only gone up 5 per cent. in the last twenty years. I am a believer in home industries. I would like to see every tool we use made in Canada, and have no objection to paying a little more than the American price, if necessary, but there is no sense or reason in the way we are soaked, and for this the bill provides no remedy; the reductions are paltry, and the dumping clause is left in full operation. I am no admirer of Henri Bourassa, but when he points to the spectacle of the Hon. Mr. Fisher telling the farmers that the bill will raise the price of their products, while at the same time the Hon. Mr. Murphy was telling an audience of town workmen that it would lower the price of provisions, his words are worth paying attention to. The fact is, the Government has no more idea what the effect will be than the man in the street, but it seems to be anything to catch a vote.

C. W. BEAVEN.

Grenville Co., Ont.

The Retired Farmer in Town.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

Just a few lines on the retired-farmer question, as the question is, in most of small towns, "What is the matter that the town is not going ahead?" Well, most every little town is loaded up with retired farmers. They come into town with about \$4,000 or \$5,000, and intend to live and enjoy the rest of their life. The first thing is to buy a house, say about \$2,000; then a piano, say about \$400; get a cow, \$50; and a horse, \$200; a buggy, \$100; harness, \$25; cutter, \$40—that is \$2,775, over half what he was going to live on. Then he is able to live and enjoy pleasure for about two years, when he finds he is going to run short of cash, plows up the lawns and puts in potatoes, spoils the look of the fine home, puts in a couple of pigs to save buying meat from the butcher, starts to sell milk around to his neighbors; to cut the milkman out, sells for a cent less, in order to get the trade; and then, when he finds out he has to go to work again, goes out to work for a boy's wages, as he is not fit for any job in town, and has to start then to learn. That is the time he is wishing he was back on the dear old farm, where he could work a day if he felt like it, and if he did not, he could lay off. But, instead, he has to work hard every day; can't miss one day, or he would lose his job. He would like to go back farming,



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but has not the money, and then he will tell his friends he is working just because he got tired sitting around, and would sooner be doing something. I'll tell you, boys, it's all right to be a sport, but a retired farmer can't stand it long. Not only that, but when a farmer goes into town he does not want to associate with the town people, he doesn't want to spend the money, he doesn't want to dress up, being always used to overalls, and doesn't feel at home with a white collar and cuffs on. Then he is left in a class by himself, with no place to go to spend a nice evening; while, on the farm, he could do up the work early and go to see some of his country friends with his old clothes on, and just feel as comfortable as if he were at home. But in town you can't do this. Now, where would you rather be living, on a farm, enjoying the pleasures of life, or in town? Oh, what a treat it is for the farmer to come back to the old farm and see everything looking so nice! How he wished he only were back again. Now, why not consider this matter before leaving the farm? There isn't one retired farmer out of a dozen that will tell you he would sooner be in town than in the country. If he does, he just doesn't want you to know he got taken in. If you don't believe this, try it. There is no proof of the pudding like the eating.

C. A. M.

Lapark Co., Ont.

Reciprocity at Washington.

M. W. Rossie, editor of the London (Ont.) Advertiser, upon returning from a ten days' visit at Washington, where he listened to congressional debates on reciprocity, and discussed the subject with several representative men, states, in reply to an inquiry by "The Farmer's Advocate," that there is no mistaking the bitterness of the opposition to the arrangement, particularly on behalf of Western States farmers and protected interests. The protected trusts are sustaining and fostering the agitation, in order to stave off the advent of fiscal reform, every day gaining ground. Sound economic doctrine is making remarkable headway, especially among the more enlightened elements of Congress who will guide the future policies of the nation, despite reactionary mossbacks of the Cannon type. The agreement will pass, in the opinion of Mr. Rossie, though it may be fought long and hard. It seems unfortunate that there, as in Canada, a simple fiscal arrangement, so obviously in the interest of the people, should be made a political football. Senator Elihu Root, of New York, one of the most sagacious of Republican statesmen, who has had extended experience in international affairs, does not believe that the protective system has greatly benefited the farmers in any case. "Conditions in the two countries," he adds, "are very much the same. The agreement is like taking down the tariff wall between two States." He also reminded his hearers that any notions of annexation might as well be dismissed at once from their minds for all time. The national destiny of Canada lay along other lines. Mr. Rossie is convinced that, as the secret springs of the efforts to thwart reciprocity become better known, the public will solidify in its support, regardless of old party affiliations. By promoting the trade and prosperity of the country, it will tend powerfully to strengthen the self-reliant spirit of Canada, and really make it a better and more loyal factor as one of the essential components of the British Empire.

Why Rich Soils Stand Drouth.

Investigations reported by Prof. J. A. Widstoe, of the Utah Experiment Station go to indicate that the amount of water actually required for the production of a pound of dry matter becomes smaller as the available fertility of the soil increases. In other words, in a rich soil a ton of water will go farther in producing growth than the same quantity of water in a poor soil. He found that thorough hoeing or cultivation throughout the season increased materially the yield of dry matter, and decreased the amount of water required per pound of dry matter produced; that resting the soil had the same effect, and that on infertile soils the water requirements of crops could be materially lowered by the addition of manure or commercial fertilizers. For example, in the Utah experiments it was found that corn required a third less water to mature a pound of dry matter on soil which had been manured or fertilized with nitrate of soda than on similar soil without such treatment. Prof. Widstoe believes that in every case the result is to be attributed to the plant food set free as a result of the cultivation, or supplied by the fertilizers. The important lesson from this work is that, if the farmer wishes to conserve a scanty water supply and use it to the best advantage in crop production, he must keep his land rich. Considered in conjunction with the well-known water-holding capacity of humus, it supplies an additional explanation of the superior thrift of crops on rich land over poor land in periods of drouth. We presume the philosophy is that, in a rich soil a small amount of water will bring into solution enough plant food for the crop to thrive upon, whereas, in a poor soil it would take a great deal more moisture to bring into solution enough nutrients to nourish the plants.

Laborers Scarce.

According to despatches from Winnipeg, the annual harvest-excursion propaganda by the railways and immigration interests is not encouraging, as the reports from labor employers all over Eastern Canada show that the present help supply is not sufficient to meet normal requirements. The proposal has, therefore, been made to inaugurate cheap harvester excursions from Vancouver and Seattle, on the Pacific coast, to the prairie wheat fields.

Winter Fair Extension.

Plans for the building to supplement the stabling accommodation at the Winter Fair, in Guelph have been prepared, and the architect is now working on the specifications. Plans for the connecting subway under the railway have also been prepared, and are now in the hands of the Grand Trunk for approval. The G. T. R. expect to finish the work in Guelph during the present fall, and, as they are to do the work on the subway, this, of course, will be completed by the time the other work is finished.