

to be above the average in some districts. Farmers all along the line are busy getting ready for the spring rush, and in one or two places even up in Grey, we saw the plows going in sod, while there was still considerable snow in some spots in the roads. In most districts the snow came early and the frost was not in very deep.

Live stock seems to have wintered very satisfactorily as far as health is concerned, but considerable of it is in low condition, due to the shortage of feed, owing to the light crop last year. We have seen this year, however, a large number of unusually well-finished steers and some of the feeders in Grey stated that they had been offered as high as 12½c. a pound for May delivery. There seems to be, in this section, an unusual scarcity of hogs and sheep, and feeders are getting good prices for both classes of stock.

"The Law and The Profits."

Ellis O. Jones, in a recent issue of the New York Independent, discusses the child labor question under the above heading as follows:

"Did I understand you to say that it was a good thing for the children to be thus employed at hard day labor?" inquired the Man from Mars, as he was being shown through the mill by the Pompous Proprietor.

"Why, yes," replied the Pompous Proprietor. "You don't suppose a man of my standing in the community would be a party to anything that was not unquestionably beneficial to the younger generation, do you?"

"I beg your pardon," said the Man from Mars sincerely. "There was no implication in my question. You must remember that I am merely a humble seeker after information. Of course, I must assume that you are practical. Otherwise, this mammoth business organization would be impossible."

"There you've hit it!" exclaimed the other with great enthusiasm. "Practical! The very word. Those who are not practical, the theorists and maudlin sentimentalists, claim that child labor is injurious, but we practical men know better."

The Man from Mars stopped and scrutinized a number of the little workers at close range. "In what way would you say briefly that this sort of thing benefited them the most?" he asked at length.

"Every way," declared the Pompous Proprietor. "It keeps them out of mischief. It increases the economic value of young manhood and young womanhood. It develops initiative. It keeps them from being mollycoddles and inefficient. It makes for morality, industry, self-restraint."

"Very interesting and enlightening, I'm sure," observed the Man from Mars thoughtfully. "It never would have occurred to me to look upon an institution such as this as being so ideally philanthropic. How very happy it must make you to be able to do such a work!"

"It would make me happy, very happy indeed, if the reformers and the legislators would only let me alone," replied the Pompous Proprietor a little sadly. "They are always wanting to regulate the labor of the children, claiming that my chief incentive is the profit I make out of it. That, of course, is absurd."

"It must be," rejoined the Man from Mars. "But what do the reformers want to do with the children?"

"They want to put them into school. Bah! What good could that do them?"

"Please don't ask me!" protested the Man from Mars. "Now as to your own children. You said you had several, did you not?"

"Oh, yes, indeed," replied the Pompous Proprietor. "In what department of your factory do they work, may I ask?"

"Why—ah—as to that—of course, you understand that my—ah—my own children do not work here. That would be—ah—well, to tell the truth, it would be very selfish of me to put my own children in here, for, don't you see, that would simply mean taking the

jobs away from poor children who needed the work. I am really sorry, however, that you can't meet my children. My girls are away at finishing school and my boys are at college. Of course, you understand it is very self-sacrificing for me to treat them in this way, but I must say that, considering the disadvantages I have given them, they compare very favorably, very favorably."

More Birds, Fewer Insects and Weed Seeds.

Birds are among man's best friends and yet we are sometimes prone to wantonly destroy members of the feathered tribe. True there are certain classes of birds that apparently injure the agriculturist and call forth his wrath. However, even the despised crow, sparrow and hawk which at times transgress and destroy some corn or wheat or carry off a few chickens are busy the greater portion of the year feeding on grubs, insects and seeds which are ever working to reduce crop yields. We complain at the increase in number of pests which attack the growing crops and yet man is largely responsible for upsetting the balance of nature, by permitting the destruction of the birds. Apparently the strong prey on the weak. All have seen the tiniest birds devouring small insects and seeds and the larger birds fighting them, driving them from their nests and destroying the eggs or the young. It is not an uncommon sight to see two or three small birds co-operating in driving away a crow or butcher bird. Then man and his agents step in and attack the larger birds. The removal of trees deprives many birds of their natural nesting places and they are forced to resort to less secure locations and run the risk of cats, snakes, etc., devouring their fledglings. By a combination of circumstances the bird population has been greatly reduced and man is the loser.

Birds are of great economic value to man and those which do frequent our premises prevent the undue increase of insects, wild seeds, harmful plants and rodents. In one sense they serve as scavengers and tend to make the earth a healthier place on which to live. It is estimated that insects cause around two hundred million dollars loss every year to the farmers of the United States. Proportionately the loss is believed to be equally great in Canada. Without the birds the loss would be beyond our comprehension. During the day swallows dart hither and thither in search of insects which constitute their sole food. The work is taken up at night by Whip-poor-wills, Nighthawks, etc., which chase moths and other nocturnal insects. Warblers, Hummingbirds and Vireos search the foliage of trees and shrubs for insects, while the class represented by Woodpeckers and Nuthatches drill into the trunks and limbs for eggs and larvae. The Graybird's family are content with devouring the terrestrial insects. The crow tribe warily follow the plow or cultivator and are instrumental in ridding the fields of numberless white grubs and cut worms which are not above totally destroying a corn or potato crop. Besides insects, birds feed on seeds and many noxious plants are prevented from spreading profusely by the watchfulness of our feathered friends, and yet, some people delight in shooting these innocent benefactors of man.

It is difficult to estimate the amount of seeds and insects consumed by a bird in a day. However, there is every reason to believe that it is enormous for the size of the consumer. Ornithologists have spent a good deal of time and study on the subject and find that birds are ravenous eaters. In "Bird-Life" by Frank M. Chapman, the results of some investigation work are to the effect that "the stomachs of four Chickadees contained one thousand and twenty-eight eggs of the cankerworm. The stomachs of four other birds of the same species contained about six hundred eggs and one hundred and five female moths of the cankerworm." The average number of eggs found in twenty of these moths was one hundred and eighty-five. Thus, it will

be seen what eight small birds were able to do in a single day to destroy enemies of foliage. While some birds are feeding on insects or their eggs others are industriously consuming numberless weed seeds, which if allowed to grow and reproduce would soon crowd out cultivated plants. Birds are truly the farmers' allies and should be carefully protected and encouraged to build their homes on the premises. Don't condemn the whole bird tribe because two or three members become bold and saucy. There is some good in the worst. Instead of hunting them with a gun use a good field glass and study their mode of living.

The domestic cat preys on birds and their nests and is largely responsible for the reduction of many species which ordinarily frequent the orchard and lawn. Ardent bird lovers swear vengeance on cats and would have them destroyed. Like the birds, cats have a service to perform. Building nesting places in suitable places near the house and putting out a little feed will attract different kinds of birds.

Apart from the economical value of birds their song and beauty should be sufficient to warrant protection. More interest is being taken each year in birds and bird life and it is reasonable to expect that the population will increase in the future rather than suffer a further decrease. Without birds the farmers' difficulties would be more arduous.

Farm Help.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

Never before was farm help so scarce in Ontario. Never before were prices so high for farm produce.

The farmer says "if I cannot get help I will have to do the best I can without it, and if the prices keep up I will do very well anyway, even with reduced acreage."

The townspeople are worrying about the next crop. Boards of Trade, Patriotic Societies and other organizations are holding meetings and trying to induce retired farmers and citizens generally to turn out and help the farmer during the season. High School boys are also being induced to enlist for farm work. Now the city people are in dead earnest; the farmers are just as much in earnest. Then why is everybody excited about greater production? It seems to me there are three reasons and all of them most important:

(1) The Allies are not getting all the food they need. The world is short of food. Ten nations are on short rations and 6 nations are on the verge of starvation.

(2) Great Britain lacks food for her people at home. The wheat of Russia is inaccessible. The Argentine has a short crop. India is 7,000 miles away and Australia 13,000 miles from Great Britain. A ship can make four round trips from Canada to England while it is making one trip from Australia. The great need, therefore, of Great Britain at the present time is an inexhaustible pile of foodstuffs on the Canadian Atlantic seaboard.

(3) Surely it is our great patriotic duty to see that our boys are properly fed in the trenches! What a shame and what a farce it would be if these splendid Canadian young men who are offering their lives for the freedom of the world should be rendered powerless for the want of food.

I do not know how much reliable help it is possible to get for our farmers for the seed time, but I believe it is the patriotic duty of every Ontario farmer at this time to sow all the crop he can possibly get in, and give it such attention as he can during the growing period. When harvest comes I think I can assure him that help will be available for the actual harvesting of his crop. If the men from the cities and towns are really serious, and I think they are, if boys who cannot go to the front want to do their bit, if Governments and municipalities and employers of labor realize the situation, and I think they do, then if it is necessary to close the schools and the shops and the factories in order to harvest the crop this will be done, rather than any soldier of the Empire at this crisis should go without food!

G. C. CREELMAN, Commissioner of Agriculture.

Toronto, Montreal, Buffalo, and Other Leading Markets

Toronto.

Receipts of live stock at the Union Stock Yards, West Toronto, on Monday, April 9, were 71 cars, comprising 1,336 cattle, 90 calves, 424 hogs, and 22 sheep. Active and strong market. Butchers' cattle, cows and bulls, a good twenty-five cents higher. Stockers and feeders, and milkers and springers, slow; prices steady. Calves, sheep and lambs, steady. Hogs, \$15.90, fed and watered.

The total receipts of live stock at the City and Union Stock Yards for the past week were:

	City	Union	Total
Cars.....	48	413	461
Cattle.....	482	3,634	4,116
Calves.....	202	1,588	1,790
Hogs.....	601	8,286	8,887
Sheep.....	202	223	425
Horses.....	57	2,223	2,280

The total receipts of live stock at the two markets for the corresponding week of 1916 were:

	City	Union	Total
Cars.....	44	403	447
Cattle.....	588	4,485	5,073
Calves.....	305	885	1,190
Hogs.....	745	7,461	8,206
Sheep.....	76	233	309
Horses.....	62	1,369	1,431

The combined receipts of live stock at the two markets for the past week show an increase of 14 cars, 600 calves, 681 hogs, 116 sheep and lambs, and 841 horses, but a decrease of 957 cattle, compared with the corresponding week of 1916.

The Toronto live-stock market opened on Monday with some 1,950 cattle of all grades on sale. The quality of which was not nearly so good as the previous week. Trade was slow and draggy all day. Some choice butcher cattle sold at steady prices, while others were from 10c. to 25c. lower than the previous week's close. Good to choice baby beef was in demand and sold as follows: 6, 790 lbs. at \$12.50; 8, 700 lbs. at \$12; 3, 740 lbs. at \$12.25; 1, 740 lbs. at \$13; 2, 770 lbs. at \$11.75. For straight carloads of butcher cattle \$11.25 per cwt. was the best price paid, but there were quite a number of small lots that sold at \$11.75

to \$12.50 per cwt. For the balance of the week the runs of cattle have been very light, the market closing with butcher cattle selling strong and from 10c. to 25c. higher than Monday. There was no change in the price of cows and bulls this week, both being steady to strong at prices the same as the previous week. Stockers and feeders were slow and weak, especially common to medium animals, which were from 25c. to 35c. lower. Grass cows were strong and in demand at prices 25c. higher. Milkers and springers were fairly steady; best cows selling at \$90 to \$110; a few choice selling at \$115 to \$130 each. Sheep and lambs were strong, especially good, grain-fed animals; choice lambs selling at 14c. to 15c. per lb., and light butcher sheep at 10½c. to 11½c., with a few real choice at 12c. to 12½c. per lb. Spring lambs sold at from \$7 to \$16 each. The \$16 lambs being 3 months old and weighing 73 to 78 lbs. each. Calves were strong most of the week, but closed a shade weaker. The hog market opened on Monday with fed and watered selling at \$16. For the balance of the week they were slow, and closed with fed and watered selling at \$15.90, and weighed off cars at \$16.15.

Live Stock Quotations.—Heavy steers choice, \$11.50 to \$11.75; good, \$10.75 to \$11.25. Butcher steers and heifers, choice \$10.75 to \$11.25; good, \$10.25 to \$10.50; medium, \$9.50 to \$9.85; common, \$8.50 to \$9.25. Cows, choice, \$9.50 to \$10; good, \$8.75 to \$9; medium, \$7.75 to \$8.25; common, \$6.75 to \$7.25. Canners and cutters, \$5.50 to \$6.50. Bulls, choice, \$9.75 to \$10.25; good, \$9.25 to \$9.50; medium, \$8.25 to \$8.75; common, \$7 to \$7.75. Stockers and feeders, choice, \$9.50 to \$10.25; medium, \$8.50 to \$9; common, \$7 to \$8. Grass cows, \$6.75 to \$7.50. Milkers and springers, best, \$90 to \$110; medium, \$85 to \$95; common, \$50 to \$60. Lambs, spring lambs, \$7 to \$14 each; yearling lambs, choice, 14c. to 15½c. per lb.; culls, 9c. to 12c. per lb. Sheep, light, 10½c. to 11½c. per lb.; heavy, 8½c. to 9½c. per lb. Calves, choice, 14c. to 15c. per lb.; medium, 11c. to 13c. per lb.; common, 6c. to 8½c. per lb.; heavy, fat, 7c. to 9½c. per lb. Hogs, fed and watered \$15.90; weighed off cars, \$16.15. Less \$2 to \$2.50 off sows, \$4 to \$5 off stags, \$1 off light hogs, and \$2 off thin feeder pigs, and half of one per cent. government condemnation loss.