

Farmers' Clubs.**Dominion Farmers' Council.**

[This Council meets on the third Thursday of every month at 2 o'clock p.m. All communications should be addressed to the Secretary, W. A. Macdonald, London, Ont. The Council has now on hand pamphlets containing its Constitution and By-laws, with an account of its origin, also pamphlets containing a form of Constitution and By-laws suitable for Farmers' Clubs, which will, on application to the Secretary, be distributed free to all parties having in contemplation the organization of clubs. Lactoscopes sent free to amalgamated clubs.]

The regular monthly meeting of this Council was held on the 19th ult., President Leitch in the chair.

ROYAL RAILWAY COMMISSION.

Letters were read from Hon. John Carling, Minister of Agriculture, and from Mr. M. S. Loneragan, Secretary of the Royal Commission on Railways, stating that, pursuant to the request of the Dominion Farmers' Council, a meeting of the Royal Commission would be held in the city of London, on Saturday and Monday, May 21st and 23rd.

After some discussion, arrangements were made for gathering witnesses from the city and surrounding districts for the purpose of setting forth the grievances of farmers, shippers, etc., in matters pertaining to railways, and as to the desirability of establishing a permanent commission for regulating railway freights.

CAPITAL INVESTED IN A STOCK FARM.

A communication was received from Mr. W. J. Biggins, Secretary of the Granton Farmers' Club, stating that a committee of five members had been appointed, pursuant to a request of the Council, for the purpose of drawing up an estimate of the capital invested in a stock farm in the neighborhood of Granton, county of Huron. The estimate was read before the Council as follows:

Land (100 acres) \$6,000; dwelling house, \$1,000; barn and outbuildings, \$1,000; 18 steers coming three years old, \$630; 3 cows, \$105; 3 yearlings, \$60; 3 calves, \$30; 2 working horses, \$350; brood mare (Canadian draft), \$250; colt or filly, \$100; 2 pigs, \$10; self-binder, \$150; mower, \$60; horse rake, \$25; seeder combined, \$70; plow and harrows, \$25; gang plow, \$18; roller, \$25; scutler, \$12; wagon and rack, \$75; fanning mill, \$25; sleighs, \$25; harness, \$50; straw cutter and power, \$100; horse fork and tackling, \$25; incidentals, \$25; total, \$10,245. The farm is divided as follows: Orchard, 2 acres; yard, garden and roots, 3 acres; bush, 10 acres; hay, 10 acres; pasture, 45 acres; crop, 30 acres.

This estimate is published meanwhile as a guide to encourage other farmers' clubs to send in similar reports. The reports will all be gone over, and criticised by members of the Council and a general average struck, the object being to arrive, as near as possible, at the average capital invested in a stock farm, a dairy farm, and a mixed husbandry farm. This will form a basis of calculation for arriving at the cost of producing the various farm crops, stock, dairy products, etc. It is hoped that other readers of the proceedings of the Council, as well as amalgamated clubs, will also send in reports, for the larger the number of reports the more accurate will the estimates be as averages for the Province, or the Dominion, as the case may be. The figures will be published in book-keeping form, so that the cost of production can be concentrated into a small space. Those who have not time to send in full estimates would greatly oblige by sending criticisms of the estimates as published from time to time. The estimates of the cost of tillage

operations may be sent in at any time during the summer or autumn months.

RENTING FARMS ON SHARES.

The programme of the day being called, the President read the following paper on the above subject from the pen of Mr. J. B. Freeman, M. P. P. :-

It has been said that the strength of nations is in proportion to their skilful cultivation of the soil. In the necessity for cultivating the earth for subsistence social order commenced. At an early date we find the master and his slaves, or serfs, engaged in husbandry; the slaves doing the labor, and—for their share of the products of their toil—getting the bare necessities of life. As civilization progresses the relation of master and slave changes, and we have landlord and tenant. Happily for this country of ours the relation between land-owners and tenants has been one of mutual good will, and we, as Canadians, can take a national pride in the knowledge that the heart-burnings, distress and crime that cast their dark shadows upon other lands are no part of our heritage.

No human arrangements are perfect, and no human laws can be formed which unscrupulous men, be they landlords or tenants, will not try to evade, and the closer together you bring the interests of the owner of the soil and the one that tills it, the better for each. Their interests should be mutual. The landlord has certain duties that he owes to his tenant, and the tenant is responsible for certain duties to his landlord. We have drifted past the days when the tiller of the soil paid for the use of the land in either a military or servile capacity. These arbitrary and vexatious tenures have been swept away, improvements have been made in the laws of the old countries to lessen the friction between the owners and the tillers of the soil. I do not wish, however, to give my advice to others for the speedy cure of this vexed problem, but to content myself with some of the methods for dealing with this question at home.

The fair rent of land is sometimes estimated at one-third of the value of its products, but there is no fixed rule other than that which prevails in all other business transactions, that each party makes the best possible bargain for himself. In some of the older counties in Ontario a "share and share alike" system prevails, and has been found to give general satisfaction to the contracting parties. The tenant buys one-half interest in all the stock and farm implements, arriving at their value either by mutual consent or through the services of competent parties in whom they have confidence. Then the tenant contracts to work the land in a good and husbandlike manner, to market the landlord's share of the grain, pay all expenses for hired labor employed in working the land, to keep fences and buildings in ordinary repair, the landlord to find the material. The landlord pays one-half of the taxes, and, in some instances, half of the road work, and half of the threshing. Then the receipts from all sources of produce and stock are equally divided between landlord and tenant. Any repairing to implements or new machinery is paid for jointly. These are the general terms; any minor details can be settled by the parties interested.

Now, as to results: First, it does away with the inability of the tenant to pay rent, as he pays in produce. If the season is an unprofitable one for farming, the landlord shares in the loss of crops, and no stock that is really needed by the tenant is forced to be sold to pay rent: neither does he have to ask his landlord to let the rent run into the next year and take all the surplus of the year, if a good one, and if a poor one, sometimes it means ruin. Then, it is cheaper for the tenant, as he has all the advantages of a well stocked farm for less outlay of capital than he could have in any other way. Then, it is better for both landlord and tenant that the farm should be well stocked, so that the fertility of the soil may not decrease for want of stock to convert all the straw, hay and coarse grains into manure. There are also many other reasons that might be given why this "share and share alike" system has much to recommend it. I regret that I have not had time to give you more than a general statement of how this

method is being worked here in Norfolk county. Mr. John B. Carpenter, the proprietor of "Madde Farm," and also the winner of the gold medal, was one of the first to inaugurate this plan, and it has been satisfactory to him and his tenants, as far as I have any knowledge. As to the percent the owner realizes on his investment, that is governed by the quality and productiveness of the soil. From observation, I have no hesitation in saying that the percent would be quite as high under the "share and share alike" system as any other. It has this to recommend it, and that is: I have never known a tenant but who had enough at the end of the year to pay all expenses and leave him higher wages than he could get as an ordinary farm laborer, even in the years that crops were poor and prices low, and in good years he has quite a surplus above all expenses. The rent means just one-half of the year's crop, and this seems to divide the value of the land and the value of labor more justly than by any other method.

DISCUSSION.

The system of renting farms described in Mr. Freeman's paper being new to the members of the Council, little was said by way of criticism, but the members thought the system should work well, providing responsible tenants could be secured who were competent and reliable in making purchases and sales. The discussion was, more or less, of a side issue, in which the members related what they knew about tenants and renting farms, the main object seeming to be the ascertaining of the condition of tenants and their ability to pay rent.

JOHN WHEATON stated that a neighbor of his paid \$500 a year as rent for 100 acres, 75 being cleared, but he did not think he was making a respectable living, although he (the tenant) seemed to be able to pay his rent.

JOHN KENNEDY stated that he had a tenant on 86 acres of his land—50 acres cleared—and he received \$300 a year as rent. The tenant paid the rent regularly and seemed to be doing well. The tenant tapped 300 trees and made a good deal of money out of molasses, but otherwise he had no right to the bush beyond the timber he required for fire-wood, and there was no grass in the bush, the trees being too thick.

PRESIDENT LEITCH said a tenant or owner should make \$100 out of molasses from 300 tapped trees. The syrup brought \$1 per gallon in the London market. This sum did not include the labor, which would require two men for an average of about three weeks. Two hundred dollars was considered a high rent in his section for 100 acres, the soil being light and the market facilities not being extra. A good tenant could make money at that figure. If he (the President) wanted to rent a farm he would look out for a good sugar bush and good orchard of at least two or three acres, which he would calculate on for paying the rent, and there was also a great advantage in being near a creamery or cheese factory.

In answer to a question by a member, John Kennedy stated that it was also customary for the tenant to pay the taxes and perform the statute labor.

JOHN O'BRIEN stated that it required a first class tenant in his section to make money at present prices of farm products.

MR. HAWKSHAW, who lives half way between London and St. Thomas, stated that \$300 was the average rent in his section for 100 acres, and he did not think that tenants were making money at that figure at present prices for farm products. Unimproved farms brought about \$70 per acre, and improved land ranged between