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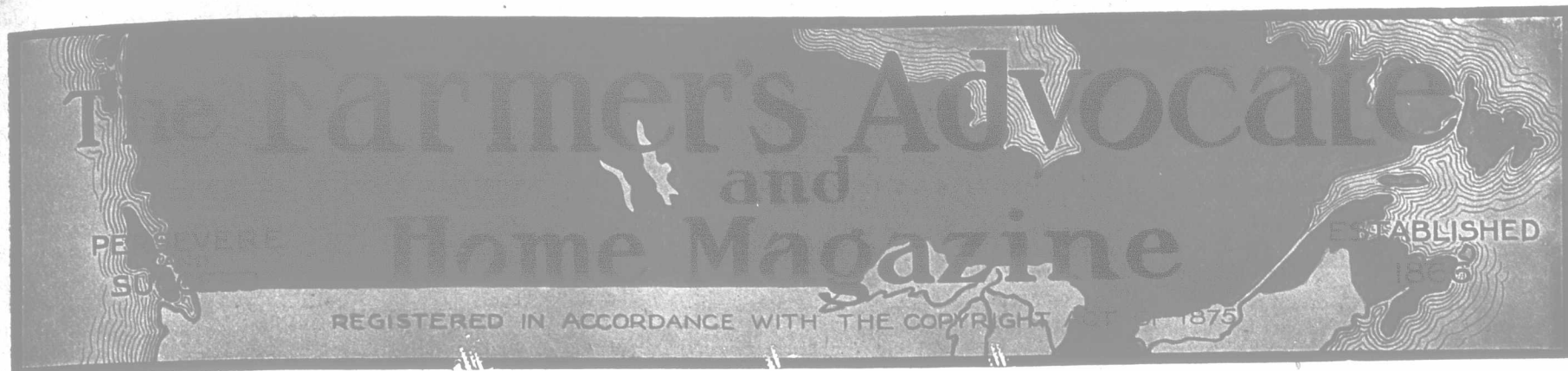
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No. 963

EDITORIAL.

The sap season! Whoop! Hooray!

Don't forget to have the horses fit, the implements in condition, and the seed grain ready.

Have you tested your seed grain for germination and examined it for weeds? Important duty.

The interest of both producer and consumer is served by bringing them as close together as possible, eliminating needlessly expensive freight hauls and middlemen's charges.

What a glorious treat are these lengthening March days: sharp at night, crisp in the morning, brightening into genial forenoons. They start our pulses bounding, cheering everybody with the exhilaration of spring.

Of all the arguments put forth against reciprocity, this statement that Canadian farmers are already too prosperous, and should not have any wider markets opened to them, is the most insolent piece of arrogance we have yet observed.

"Every hillock in the Province of Quebec should have sheep grazing upon it, for the sheep are the greatest enemies of the weeds, and, in destroying them, they enrich the land to be later turned under by the plow."—[Hon. Sydney Fisher.

That's a very good article on cement tile, by Prof. Wm. H. Day, remarked a critical reader the other day, adding an unconscious pun, "It's as clear as day—Wm. H. Day," which is considerable daylight for an underground subject, we should say.

The existence of a Second Chamber not wholly responsible to the electorate is a travesty on the idea of responsible government. It becomes either a useless tool of the party that creates it, or else a bulwark of privilege, often both. Advocates of responsible government with a second-chamber brake, say, in effect: "Let the people rule, but not completely."

The benefit or injury of a certain tariff change can never be judged merely by its effect on the producers in a certain industry. The wider interest of the consumer must be considered. Yet there are American legislators who would deprive ninety million people of the boon of cheap fish for fear of jeopardizing the welfare of a New England fishing village. It is an extreme case of wanting to sacrifice the interests of the many for the few.

There are two interests in every trade negotiation. There is the interest of the producer who wants to sell dearly, and the interest of the consumer who wants to buy cheaply. Both are important, and neither should be neglected, but the ends of economy are most surely served by looking first and mainly to the interest of the consumer. And since every producer is a consumer of food, clothing and raw material, the cost of production is reduced to a minimum in all industries when the cost of living, raw material, fuel and implements is reduced to rock bottom.

A scathing arraignment of the Canadian branch-bank system and its effect on the business development of Canada appears in the February number of "Ourselves."

In submitting a Senate reform resolution in the Dominion House of Commons, the mover declared that the Second Chamber is composed of three classes, viz.: Those who value it as a respectable refuge for their declining years in ease, at the expense of the country; those who value it for social position and for advancing personal and business schemes; and those who give from long and useful experience much benefit to the country. A very considerate and moderate criticism, indeed!

Amid the variant views on the reciprocity question, with which the newspaper air has been filled, it has been pleasant to observe one note of harmony. Farmers and manufacturing interests both seem desirous of increase of trade along East-and-West lines, with special reference to trade with Britain. The former, or some of them, at least, suggest a means by which this may be brought about. They urge the Government to increase the British preference by 50 per cent. this year, and in the near future to have complete free trade between Canada and the mother country. That would certainly develop the East-and-West trade enormously, and, incidentally, would lower the cost to Canadian consumers of necessities, such as sugar, cottons, woollens, edge-tools, hardware, etc.

"This treaty puts the farmer on a free-trade basis for what he has to sell, a protection basis for what he has to buy. How long, do you think, is the farmer likely to stand for that?"

This sentence, from Hon. Clifford Sifton's speech, contains the germ of a large part of the city men's resistance to reciprocity in farm products. They realize, as the test approaches, that this talk, of which we have heard so much, about the benefit of protection to the farmer, will be proven to be anywhere from three-quarters to nine-tenths fallacy. They discern quite truly that when the farmer realizes this fact, the game will be up. He will demand, not, we hope, the elimination of duties, but a very radical scaling down. The manufacturers see only too clearly that high protection is doomed by the logic of results. They want to avert the first step towards freer and fairer trade.

One of the most satisfactory developments in the seed business is the trade that is being worked up among our farmers through the seed fairs, through the medium of our advertising columns, and otherwise. No fewer than a dozen farmers offered seed grain, corn and seed potatoes through our columns last week. At the very low rate of three cents a word charged for insertion in the "Want and for Sale" column, the revenue to us is inconsiderable, scarcely sufficient, in fact, to pay for the space and trouble, but we rejoice because the interest of our readers is served by thus bringing a supply of choice seed grain of superior varieties within reach of the general farmer at the very modest prices which elimination of the retailer permits. If you have a good supply of good clean grain of choice varieties, let fellow farmers know about it. A small advertisement in the "Want and for Sale" column, at three cents a word, will only cost seventy-five cents to a dollar, and will astonish you with the results, especially if repeated a few times.

Unneighborly Townships.

What with the many herrings being drawn across the trail of the reciprocity issue, there are some few farmers actually becoming convinced that the throwing down of duties on farm products entering Canada will prove a disadvantage, seeing it is accompanied by such a small reduction in the tariff on manufactured goods and other things the farmer has to buy. They hear of some line of farm produce which is, or at some time has been, lower in the United States than in Canada, and are startled to think what would happen if our market were thrown open to American farmers. Now, the fact of the matter is that, while just at the moment the reaction from a speculative craze has slumped prices of eggs and dairy produce on the American market, yet, taking the average of recent years, United States prices of general farm produce have ruled rather higher, we believe, than Canadian prices of similar commodities, so that under reciprocity the Canadian farmer stands to gain more than his American neighbor.

But the fundamental point we wish to emphasize is that, supposing prices averaged about the same on both sides the line, reciprocity would still be a boon. To appreciate the principle of mutual benefit, let us consider an easily-comprehended example: Two villages, A and B, are situated side by side in two neighboring townships, C and D. Suppose there was a law passed in each municipality preventing either village, under penalty of a fine, from buying anything outside the township in which it was situated. Suppose some year there was a partial failure of the fruit crop in township C, so that it could not produce enough to feed its village, A. What would be the result? Fruit would go up to a price that would restrict consumption in village A, thus imposing great hardship on the inhabitants, while the farmers in township C would not benefit much, because they would have so little to sell. Across the townline, the farmers in township D have plenty of fruit, but have to send their surplus to a market twelve hundred miles away. On the other hand, the hens in township D are not laying enough eggs to supply village B. So the price of eggs goes up in village B to a point where people will buy just as few as they can get along with. And the busy hens in township C are laying eggs to be shipped three thousand miles away, to a market where they will net five or ten cents a dozen less than if they could be marketed freely in B. So it goes with one product and another, year after year, high prices restricting production, followed by low prices in times of large supply, and these periods occurring frequently, though not by any means simultaneously, in both townships.

Now, any clear-headed person can see that those municipal by-laws are not only vexatious, but costly; and that if both villages were allowed to buy when they pleased and where they pleased, it would tend to steady prices and enlarge the aggregate demand. Thus it would not only advantage consumers, but would provide the farmers in each township with the widest possible market, at the highest possible level of prices. Especially would it improve the prices for either township in a year of heavy production in that locality, with a short crop in the other. And bear in mind that an extra cent a basket, or a pound, means so much more in the aggregate on a large than on a short crop.

Just as it pays the farmers of a township and the buyers of a village to have the widest possible market in which to sell or buy, so it pays