

The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

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EDITORIAL.

Exemption tribunals are only human.

November made up for what October did to us.

Those of whom much is expected have votes at the coming election.

Give all kinds of breeding stock as much free range in the fresh air as possible.

It is a waste of feed to leave stock out nights in inclement late fall weather.

The farmer works without any guarantees and, therefore, expects little interference.

By this time all our readers should have bought their victory bonds. If they haven't there is still time.

Four-footed hogs are scarce, but from all accounts there is still an over-supply of the two-legged variety.

Some people seem to think an army can be fed on wind; and generally those who think so are quite "windy."

Some papers say Santa Claus is non-partisan, but they do not seem to be quite sure that he belongs to the "Union."

The Government asks an increase in hog production. Farmers ask for a reasonable supply of feed. Can the country's officials help?

Raising the race cry in a country like Canada can never unite the people. If ever this country needed united effort it is now.

If farming isn't an essential occupation, what about candy making and candy selling? The necktie clerk would also look better in skirts.

The man who knowingly sells an animal infected with a contagious disease to go into another herd and spread ruin is worse than a thief.

For the present and the future breed better live stock and more of it. There appear to be good times ahead for the man with the right class of breeding stock.

All true Canadians desire that all possible be done toward the winning of the war. It is only natural that they should differ on ways and means following the revelations of the past three years and more.

The only thing the authorities can guarantee the farmer is that he must take the chance. To his credit be it said that he has risen to the occasion nobly and produced abundantly. We have faith, too, that he will do so again.

An election campaign of such moment as the one in which Canada is now fumbling for light should bring forth from political leaders of all stripes a clear, honest elucidation of the facts and be entirely free from narrow, partisan bitterness.

It has been pointed out that large quantities of Western screenings—good feed—are sold to go to feed companies in the United States at prices much lower than those asked for the same material in Canada. Why not save this feed for Canadian feeders and let them have it at a fair price?

Chance it.

Farmers generally sell on a declining market. This buyers know, and if they are anxious for any particular product and have the organization well completed it is an easy matter to get the product. Take hogs as an instance. When the market drops 25 cents per cwt. one day and 50 cents the next, and so on, it is only a few days until it is glutted with all kinds of pigs from old sows to unfinished porkers, and then a very reasonable excuse may be found for dropping the price possibly \$2 or \$2.25 per cwt., and still the hogs in droves come into the stock yards. After it is all over hogs go up again, and when hogs are going up the farmer holds.

There is a lack of confidence in country districts in many of the schemes put on for increased production, and judging from meetings held to discuss the present bacon hog propaganda, farmers do not feel at all certain about the outcome. They have little confidence that the price will remain at a level to ensure them against loss, and when they read reports in the press of eighty per cent. and forty-five per cent. profits made by the packers of hogs, they are even less inclined to take hold. True, the Government has a scheme which they call controlling the packer, but the farmer has lost faith in most Government schemes. He sees everybody else guaranteed against loss, if limited to what the authorities think a fair profit, and wonders if the need is so great why the producer of food essential in the fight cannot get some real assurance that he will not have to "chance it" absolutely. Not long ago we heard a good farmer make the statement that the farmers of this country would be willing to turn their farms over to the Government if the latter would allow them 5 per cent. on their investment, and the said farmers would work at \$1.10 per day—soldiers' pay—as working foremen on these farms. Then labor could be conscripted to help make the farms produce. Surely farmers are entitled to 5 per cent. on their investment. If they are producing at the call of the Government, the Government should give them some sort of assurance. If they cannot, the farmer thinks they had better not ask anything. And yet they say it is our patriotic duty to produce. The Canadian farmer has understood that since the war began, and no one can say that he has not done admirably well. Patriotically, he is ready to go the limit. He will produce that which the country needs and will do it without half the haranguing now thrust upon him, but he must first be assured that no one is going to stand in between and reap the benefits of his labor which he intended for a living for himself and the boys at the front, and the women and children of the Allies overseas.

We recently heard a well-to-do farmer—a man who signified his intention of keeping more brood sows—say in a meeting of farmers for the purpose of devising ways and means of increasing bacon-hog production, that the first step necessary to the success of the undertaking was to establish confidence in the farming community that a fair deal would be theirs. The point we wish to make is that there is lack of confidence. We take the Food Controller's word for it that bacon is absolutely essential. We believe it is necessary that it be produced. The Department of Agriculture is putting on a campaign to increase hog production. It is not meeting with the unqualified support of those who must feed the hogs. Unless the man on the land can be shown that the authorities will absolutely control the product so that the farmer gets his small share of the benefit of producing the pork, that the packer gets what is fair—for the farmer believes he is entitled to profit on packing the meat, and that the troops overseas or the women and children of the Allies get it at the least possible cost, he will continue to be a little dubious. The producer of hogs is not sure he can get the feed. His labor grows scarcer daily, and there are rumblings of dissatisfaction from some districts where

further stripping has been recently in progress. He has no assurance that when hogs are plentiful for market next fall, as would be the result of the increased number of brood sows kept, that the price would not go down rapidly and apparently with no other reason than that hogs were plentiful.

We heard another farmer say recently that within his memory he never saw as many brood sows go to his station for shipment to the slaughter houses in any similar period as had been the case during the last two weeks. Why? Farmers lack confidence in the authorities that they will get a square deal. This is serious. A lack of confidence is dangerous. Our best information is that the increase of bacon is essential right now, but farmers have little faith. The Government says that a price for the finished product cannot be fixed even as low as a 12-cent minimum. The farmer reasons thus: If the Government cannot take a chance on guaranteeing a 12 or 14-cent minimum, hogs must be going down, and he will not feed expensive grains which he feels he will have to buy if he increases his hog output and takes the chance the Government will not take. He thinks he sees a nigger in the wood pile. There may be no nigger there, but nevertheless he must remember that the farmer's viewpoint will eventually determine whether or not hogs are increased in Canada by next fall. To be sure that they are, would it not be wise to remove all doubt? Show the farmer the available supply of feed if there is any. If there isn't, the hogs will not grow on wind and water. Make it plain that he will get feed as cheaply as possible. Leave as many producers in the country districts as the Military Service Act recognizes should be left to properly maintain the absolutely necessary food supplies, and then assure the producers more fully as to price next fall. It is all very well to say: "Oh the price is sure to be good," but remember that when the Government will not guarantee anything not even a 12-cent minimum the farmer believes that they know better and he acts accordingly. He will not put the feed he has into pigs to the exclusion of a corresponding amount of other stock, unless he is assured that he will break even, and no one can blame him. He'll do his utmost and has done it to produce foods since this war began, but if bacon is more necessary than beef or milk or butter, he must be convinced that it is, and that he can get a living for himself and family and do better work toward the winning of the war by producing bacon.

We have never favored price setting as a practice. We do not believe interference does much good as a whole, but the farmer in this case asks for assurance. It is a business proposition with him, just as packing pork is a business proposition and manufacturing munitions is a business proposition. How many manufacturers or packers could or would work at a loss, or on anything in which they did not feel reasonably sure of a "fair" profit, or even more? The farmer is the same kind of a human being, although many ask him to do things almost beyond human possibility.

A farmer rose in a meeting in Toronto and made the statement that he "did not think it was the opinion of the people of the Province of Ontario that we should get exorbitant prices for the production of our stuff when our fellowmen are starving on the other side of the water." We were glad to hear this man come out firmly and patriotically against undue profits. Farmers have been getting good prices the last few years, but no one has been able to show that they are making large profits. Cost of production has increased enormously and must be reckoned with. The farmer is in a position to know what he can and cannot do. A producer of the right sort asked us just the other day whether we would advise him to keep an extra sow and put the feed into her and the litters and keep just that much away from his cattle. We did not advise. It was the man's own