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EDITORIAL

Western Canada's Weather

The winter season of Western Canada in 1909 and covering the first month in 1910 has been of the type that makes the Canadian West famous. Those who are prone to knock the glorious West as a country of cold and storm will have difficulty in locating more congenial weather conditions than have prevailed. With citizens in all parts going about with overcoats open and reports of Alberta farmers plowing in January, the impression is left that we are in a strictly temperate zone. Who would not endure an occasional storm or even a severe winter in a quarter of a century to enjoy such winters as the present ?

Government Pork-Packing Plant

The provincial government of the province of Alberta has promised to build a pork-packing establishment, providing the farmers guarantee to produce and supply enough hogs to warrant the operation of such a plant the year round. The association of the United Farmers of Alberta took upon themselves the responsibility of stating that the farmers of the province would guarantee the necessary number, and furthermore adopted a form of agreement to be signed by the farmer. This agreement will be presented to the members of the various United Farmers' Association Unions throughout the province, and it is thought there will be no difficulty in getting a sufficient number to sign the contract. The hog-raiser contracts to supply a certain number each year for the period of five years from the commencement of the operation of the said plant. He also promises not to sell hogs to any other company, except those sold for breeding purposes. If he fails to comply with the agreement he must pay two dollars for each hog so disposed of contrary to the agreement, and the same amount for each hog he fails to supply of the number which he promised.

It is quite evident that Alberta is now to have a pork-packing plant, as it all depends on the willingness of the farmer to guarantee the product necessary for its operation. The farmers of Western Canada have accomplished much through co-operation, and if Alberta's pork-packing plant is to be successful, the same true co-operation will be of great value.

Alberta's Agricultural College

It is now understood that the agricultural college for the province of Alberta is to be located at Strathcona in connection with the university. Premier Rutherford, before the convention of the United Farmers' Association, definitely stated that such was the case. Coming from such a source as the premier, there is no need that there should be further controversy on the matter, for whatever may be the opinions held throughout the various parts of the province, it is most unlikely that this decision will be revoked. The FARMER'S ADVOCATE has always contended that while to a certain extent the matter of location was quite important, yet it is only of minor significance, when compared with the competency of the men at the head of such an institution, and the prominence given the science of agriculture by the governors, if connected with the university. All should cease discussing whether or not any political expediency was instrumental in terminating matters where we now find them. The duty of all interested in agriculture and agricultural education is to awaken to the fact that such a college is being instituted in the province, and they should see to it that not only the interests of the future generation are being provided for, but also the present needs of the husbandman.

It goes without serious questioning that with any agricultural college, whether affiliated with a university or not, there should be connected with it an experimental or demonstration farm. Theory without practice, and especially in the science of agriculture, is something not to be commended. What Alberta wants is not an agricultural college that is going to build up a university, but an agricultural institution that is going to promote the agricultural interests of the province and produce men skilled, not only in the science department, but also possessing a practical knowledge warranting practice as well as theory. The question of location and general fault-finding should cease, and the demands of the farmer be discussed in such way as to ensure the best results.

Saskatchewan's Convention

No person with the interests of the agriculturist at heart could attend the convention of agricultural societies recently held in Regina without feeling that there was a dignity about intelligent farming that was worth while. Saskatchewan, from an agricultural viewpoint, has made rapid strides during the past decade. The reason for this advancement is found in part in her rich acres, but it is found also in the intelligence of the men who till those acres. It is most gratifying to see delegates from all parts of a large province gather in convention and maintain perfect harmony for four days, each including three sessions, when so many problems of vital interest are being discussed.

The superintendent and the delegates deserve the highest praise for the successful outcome of the convention. When such bodies forget petty differences and proceed in moderation even vexed problems can be settled without difficulty. Furthermore, it is this rational moderation that commands respect from governments and results in action in accord with their wishes. The province is bound to gain much in regard to facilities for education in the rural districts as a result of this convention.

With competent men in charge agricultural societies are no less powerful as factors in improving agricultural conditions than ever they were — they are of greater force than at any time in the past.

Do You Eat Meat ?

The agitation against prevailing high food prices is growing. In American cities thousands of people wear buttons bearing this inscription : "I don't eat meat : do you ?" In this country meat eaters are becoming vegetarians, and say they won't eat flesh again until the price is reduced. So the question of high food prices looms large and governments talk of investigating the whole problem.

Consumers have suddenly become incensed at food prices, though prices have been advancing steadily towards their present level for the past decade. They want values reduced at once, and take the bold stand that no more business will be done until they are. But boycotting will never produce more than a temporary reduction in food prices. Boycotting is a sort of safety valve and will relieve the pressure for a time, but the public tires of "blowing itself off" that way for long.

The cause of high food prices needs to be investigated and the food producer stands to gain as much by the findings as the consumer does. It is idle to assume that cattle raisers are profitting by the high beef prices to the extent somebody else in the meat business is. The increase in prices for live stock between 1900 and 1910 has not been in proportion to the increase in the price charged the ultimate consumer over the retail butchers' counter. Who