

The Farmer's Advocate

and Home Magazine

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Established
1866.

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875.

Vol. XLIV.

LONDON, ONTARIO, JUNE 17, 1909

No. 873

EDITORIAL

Quest of the Bacon-hog Commission.

The letters appearing from time to time in "The Farmer's Advocate," setting forth the cost and the profits of hog-raising by Canadian feeders, suggest a line of inquiry of which, no doubt, advantage will be taken by the Royal Commission being despatched by Hon. Sydney Fisher, Dominion Minister of Agriculture. In the press references to this subject, stress has been laid chiefly upon the search to be made in Denmark, Ireland, and in English consuming centers, for the secrets of the supremacy of Danish and Irish bacon. The commissioners will, assuredly, come upon much evidence in regard to quality, proximity to market, and uniformity, to which our attention has been called by others who have before traversed these fields. Their object will be to bring home to the Canadian producer the conditions under which an increased share of the British market for hog products is to be profitably held. It will probably be found in the case of Denmark, for example, that the bacon-hog producer there belongs to a shrewd, patient type of husbandman, all of whose operations are permeated with the essentials of thrift. His simplicity in living may make even modest returns, individually, for bacon hogs and butter, go further than in the case of those whose lives and surroundings are differently ordered. It is probable that he may be found more amenable to co-operative control and governmental regulation than the democratic Canadian farmer who is disposed to be a law unto himself in the matter of breeds and methods, or whether he shall raise hogs at all or not, if the packing-house prices take too disheartening a curve downward when feeders are speeding the other way, causing him to disregard the good old English maxim, "It's dogged that does it." Distant hills look green—none more so than those of Ireland—and the achievements of the Danes have been so long dinned into our ears in a general way that it may be comforting, perhaps, to have before us the undeniable and official truth; but to go no further away, let it be remembered that the intelligent farmers of Ontario have been raising bacon hogs for many years, out of which packers have grown rich, and at the Guelph Agricultural College and the Ottawa Experimental Farm feed lots, investigators have been working out the problems of quality and cost of production.

In the south-western peninsula of Ontario we have a body of farmers who have made a speciality of hog production on natural grass, clover and corn, through the media of such types as the Chester White, the Jersey Red and the Berkshire. In some cases late fall litters are carried cheaply through the winter, growing slowly, but do not reach the market till some ten months or a year old, while other bunches, arriving on the scene at the March farrowing, soon go out on the pasture lot or clover field, and later on the finishing is hastened with a run on field peas and all the corn in the ear they want, reaching the packer's weights at six or seven months old. The latter is regarded as the more profitable system, but many hold to the virtue of giving hogs time to "grow." Further east, in such counties as Middlesex, Oxford, Perth or Simcoe, the procedure may be quite different, both as regards feeds and methods, while in Eastern Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime Provinces, men can be found who are experts in economical hog-rearing. Here and there men have quit the business in disgust, and should be asked why. The packers and provisioners can furnish

useful information as to the great increase and nature of Canadian consumption and its effect upon exporters of bacon. Now, along with what may be learned abroad, why not assemble and classify this most valuable body of Canadian experience under different conditions, a capable digest of which will disclose for the benefit of feeders generally the details of the most profitable practice?

The suggestion has been made that since American hog products have been crowding into Canada at a disquieting rate over a fairish protective tariff, and presumably at a profit, the commission might do worse than make some enquiries into the ways of the American hog-raiser; but in Essex and Kent, which produce far more hogs than any other counties in Ontario, we have an approximation to his methods, though in some respects under very much better conditions, and "The Farmer's Advocate" would respectfully suggest that a first-hand official account of what has been learned there, and in the other centers of swine lore already indicated, should beyond any question be embodied in the findings of the commission. The farmers of a Province, the live stock of which includes nearly 2,000,000 hogs per year, valued at from \$12,000,000 to \$14,000,000, to say nothing of our experiment stations, must have accumulated a fund of knowledge pertinent to this investigation, and a portion of the \$10,000 which Parliament has voted for the purpose should most certainly be devoted to an adequate collection of the facts, along with an illuminating statement of the lessons which they teach.

For the Broad View.

Public opinion in the banner Province of the Dominion divides between the two immense national canal projects looming up before Canadian statesmen, somewhat according to local interests. The Ottawa River districts are in favor of the immediate construction of the Georgian Bay canal, because, apart from its advantages as a national waterway, they realize that it would place them upon the highway of export and inter-Provincial water-borne traffic, besides affording opportunity for the development of immense water-powers for industrial and utilitarian purposes. This is all well and good, but must not be allowed to bias the national perspective out of alignment with the principle of the greatest good to the greatest number.

The inhabitants of Southern Ontario view with misgivings a proposed expenditure, of which they will bear their share, contributed through the national exchequer, but which would necessarily draw traffic from the southern route, by way of the new artificial short-cut to tidewater. This attitude is also quite natural, but should not be entertained by any patriotic citizen to the prejudice of the policy of greatest national benefit. The whole is greater than its part, and the interest of the Dominion far transcends the interest of any one Province, or part of a Province. It is just such narrow self-seeking which is responsible for the chaos of American tariff policy, and which in our own country led to a compromise between two cities, by providing a terminus for a transcontinental railway at a neutral inland city, namely, Moncton, New Brunswick.

If Canada is ever to achieve the destiny for which nature designed her, neighborhood, county, provincial and class interests must be submerged completely in a vast national desire for national good. The Canadian people are worthy and capable of broad views. Let us show it in the consideration of each great question as it comes to the front.

Silos Rapidly Increasing.

Every once in a while we meet someone, quite often a city man, who seems to have imbibed the idea that silos are going out of vogue. One would think the large number of these modern feed storages to be seen in almost any up-to-date dairying or stock-raising district of Ontario and Quebec would disabuse the minds of pessimists, but there is no accounting for the prolificacy of wrong ideas. They breed like rabbits, and have more lives than the proverbial cat. One croaker, who, thanks to some omission or error on his own part, has had unfavorable experience with a silo, will sometimes inoculate more people with the virus of his disfavor than a dozen successful silage-feeders can soon cure.

Nevertheless, silos are multiplying in the land. Dominion and Provincial authorities have noted the fact. Experts and observant travellers bear witness to it. Silo-builders report more orders than they can well handle, and firms supplying silo-building apparatus furnish convincing figures of increased business. Where one silo goes up, numerous others generally soon follow. For example, a farmer in Wellington County, Ont., who had a cement silo built in 1907, tells us that the builder put up one other that year, and this year has thirty-five orders booked, with prospects for several more. Similar tales come from other widely-separated districts. Thousands of farmers are demonstrating their faith in the utility of this method of feed-preservation, by displacing temporary wooden structures with those of solid concrete or cement blocks, either of which, however it may be in the colder regions where lumber is plentiful, is preferable to any form of wooden silo, for a farmer in Western or Southern Ontario who has his buildings permanently arranged.

Fairly bewildering is the variety of silos, and the claims set forth severally on their behalf. The old-fashioned, carpentered, built-in silo and underground pit have long since been superseded. In place of the former, we have two general forms of wooden silo, the stave and the hoop. The stave silo consists essentially of narrow plank stood upright in a circle, and held together by iron rods in half, third or quarter sections, and bent into the form of hoops. The hoop silo consists of two thicknesses of inch lumber applied horizontally to upright scantling stood in circular form, one layer of durable material on the inside, with a thickness of rougher stuff outside. This kind of silo is very common in Eastern Ontario and Quebec. Probably it stands with less attention than a stave silo, and may keep the silage with less trouble from freezing, on account of the air-space.

Of masonry silos, we have stone, brick, solid concrete, and cement blocks, nearly all of which are now built round. The latter two are most to be recommended for localities where gravel, sand and small stone are available. The silo of hollow cement blocks is a modern improvement on the monolithic style. It may be so built and reinforced as to be quite sufficiently strong, and while as yet somewhat more expensive, keeps the silage with rather less freezing around the edges, which is an advantage of greater or less importance, according to locality, exposure, size of silo, rate of feeding, and temperature of stable.

The latest idea of all is the steel silo, which has been advertised this year in "The Farmer's Advocate." Protected from rust by an outside coat of paint, and an inside coating with a special preparation which, being liquefied and applied, hardens into a sort of enamel coating, it is believed such a silo will prove durable, and