

Farm and Dairy

AND

Rural Home

"The Farm Paper for the farmer who milks cows."
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The Rural Publishing Company, Ltd.
PETERBORO AND TORONTO.

"Read not to contradict and to confute, nor to believe and take for granted, but to weigh and consider."—Bacon.

Pensions for Soldiers

THE Canadian Council of Agriculture has recommended that the monthly pension payable to soldiers who have been totally disabled be increased from \$40 to \$60. Concurrently with this recommendation of the Council of Agriculture, news comes from Ottawa that the pension provisions are to be revised and allowances increased. Although the increases have not been definitely decided upon, it is to be hoped that they will approximate the \$60 standard. A man incapable of doing anything for himself could not possibly live on \$40 a month, as he would not only have himself to provide for, but, in many cases, would have to pay someone to take care of him. Total disability consists in the loss of both legs, both arms or both eyes. Surely the man who has sacrificed so much is worthy of a sufficient pension from his country to ensure him against the additional privation of continual poverty.

While endorsing any move that may be taken to increase the pensions of private soldiers, we must express our entire disapproval, however, of proposed increases in the pensions to commissioned officers. Already the spread between the pensions of the officer and the private is too wide. We can understand why in a regular army the pensions of the officers would greatly exceed those of the private, but in a volunteer army, such as ours, the private may have sacrificed more than the officer when he entered military life. He may be more highly educated and his pre-war position more remunerative. On the basis of sacrifice, the officer and the private of a volunteer army are on the same plane. Then why the wide divergence in military pay and pensions to men of the two classes?

Provincial Municipal Affairs

THE Ontario Government has announced its intention of establishing a Municipal Department under the direction of a Deputy Minister who, in many respects, is to have the power of a Cabinet Minister. In fulfilling this pledge it is to be hoped that the Ontario Government will recognize the wide field for service that lies before such a department, and that it will arrange to have the department so conducted that it will be of the greatest possible value to the hundreds of municipalities both rural and urban in the province.

Most people, and possibly the Government itself, may not be aware that fully half the time of the Ontario Legislature and its numerous committees is occupied with the consideration of municipal affairs in one form or another. Much of the work now thrown on the legislature and its committees to perform might be handled more advantageously and expeditiously by a municipal department of the Government, which would be in a position to gather and record data bearing on the issues that are raised, and which the committees of the legislature seldom possess. Thus these matters would be dealt with more intelligently.

There are numerous ways in which a provincial municipal department may be of great service to rural municipalities in Ontario. Numerous rural municipalities find it necessary to set aside sinking funds from year to year. The amounts thus set aside are small and, therefore, it is not easy to invest them to advantage. Often they are simply deposited in a bank where they draw a low rate of interest. Other municipalities issue debentures and often have to pay unduly high rates of interest for the use of the money thus obtained. A capably managed Provincial Municipal Department could arrange with the Government to guarantee the municipal debentures, and to resell them to other municipalities having money to invest in the form of their sinking funds. The savings that would thus be effected might not be popular with the banks and brokers, but would tend to save hundreds of thousands of dollars to the rural municipalities of Ontario, inasmuch as those municipalities that are now receiving about three per cent. on their deposits might readily receive two and possibly three per cent. more, while other rural municipalities which are paying unduly high interest on the money they raise in the form of debentures might save at least one per cent. in the interest they pay.

At one time or another practically every municipality in the province finds it necessary to build various forms of concrete bridges and culverts, lay drains and to experiment in the construction of different classes of roads. A municipal department, through the employment of capable engineers, would be in a position to advise the municipalities as to the best type of bridges to construct, their cost and longevity, and consult with them on the laying of drains. Thus it could save them much costly and needless experimenting. If necessary a moderate charge might be made for such services which scarcely any municipality would object to paying.

Uniform Assessments Needed

THE system of making municipal assessments that is followed in Ontario has long been the subject of unfavorable criticism. Often it is so manifestly unfair as to amount to almost a public scandal. Some municipalities assess both land and buildings at practically their full value. Others assess improvements high and low. Still others assess both land and buildings at far below their real value. This condition makes the statistics relating to the value of rural and urban lands and improvements, which the Government publishes each year, most unreliable. It is unfair, also, in the matter of levying county rates.

County councils each year waste much time struggling with the problems that are thus created. The provincial municipal department, which the Government has announced its intention of establishing, should lose no time in taking action to ensure a greater uniformity of assessment in the different municipalities, not only of each county, but of the province at large.

In view of the important work this new department of the Government will be expected to conduct the Government should understand that the province desires it to see that the most capable men possible are placed in charge of its administration. The deputy minister should be a man who has had long municipal experience, and who has proved his ability as an administrator. He should be capable, also, of developing the work of the department along broad lines. Too often there is a tendency on the part of the government to place well-paid clerks in charge of important departments. Such a mistake in an appointment of this kind would be most unfortunate and unsatisfactory to the province.

The Live Stock Outlook

(Nor' West Farmer.)

EUROPE has now twenty-eight million fewer cattle, fifty-four million fewer sheep and thirty-two million fewer hogs than she had at the beginning of 1914. The longer the war lasts the more rapidly will the decrease in live stock occur. All the nations of the continent are consuming their breeding stock at an increasing rate as the months go on and even the herds and flocks of England are being reduced of national necessity, and the end is not yet. The world is already many millions of head short of normal holdings of cattle, sheep and swine, and will be short many millions more before peace is made.

Succeeding the war, Europe will require breeding stock, cattle especially, and this continent is the only source from which breeding cattle can be drawn. It is not practicable to procure them anywhere else. This is the principal basis for expecting that live stock prices, particularly cattle and sheep prices, will be maintained somewhat near their present levels for some time after the war.

Besides reducing her live stock one hundred and fifteen million head in three years, Europe has added several million men to her meat-eating population. Many million men in the armies of Russia, Italy, Austria, Germany and even France and England are eating a meat ration to whom before the war meat was a luxury and not a regular part of the diet. They are going to be meat eaters from this time on, adding to the problem of finding meat supplies in the face of a world shortage and ensuring that values will be maintained. Cattle and sheep, considering these conditions, are not unreasonably high. Probably at their going prices they are as safe and wise an investment as there is. It does not seem that either could cheapen seriously for years.

Farmers who are planning to provide a supply of ice for the hot days of next summer are already beginning to build their ice houses. There is no better time to build ice houses than in the fall. A very inexpensive shelter for ice may be constructed by digging a pit and covering it with a roof. Although such an ice house is easy to fill, it is hard to empty. However, it has the advantage of being very cheap.

Mr. T. A. Crearer, president of the United Grain Growers, Limited, is to enter the Dominion Cabinet. His appointment is a tribute to the personal worth of Mr. Crearer; it is also a recognition of the political power of the Grain Growers' Associations of the west.