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EDITORIAL.

A late season does not necessarily mean a light harvest.

There are gaps to close on the farm and gaps to be filled at the front.

Increasing production is just as patriotic work as is telling someone else to do it.

The Canadian people should at least own and operate the railways they have paid for.

There are those who think that agriculture is getting too many "assistants" and not enough assistance—real help.

Selfishness cannot exist in an individual or class where the proper ideals of citizenship are held and lived up to.

The farm-born boys in the cities are now urged to return to the farms. But, when you think of it, why did they leave the farms?

That surplus of potatoes spoken of a little over two months ago must have been pitted in a bomb-proof dug-out. It hasn't emerged yet at any rate.

The crows are now calling: "Corn!" "Corn!" Next winter the cattle will be bawling: "Corn!" "Corn!" Put in more corn and plan to keep off the crows.

Change work with neighbor Smith and neighbor Jones. This class of help will prove satisfactory, will not be so particular as to hours, and will aid in getting over the bad spots.

Those in charge of the campaign to increase production got everybody started before the weatherman realized that sunshine and warmth were necessary with an occasional shower.

Those evolving credit schemes to get reasonable money for the farmer must remember that the farmer who has money can borrow more, but the man without capital, though honest, is deserving of their best effort.

Von Hindenburg's new manoeuvres didn't release enough men for an advance on Calais after all. He is kept busy in an effort to save his battalions from going in that direction, not as victors but as prisoners of war.

It doesn't speak very well for the conditions under which farming has been carried on in this country when those interested in greater production find farmers handicapped for lack of funds to put in seed. If the money shortage is as acute as painted, something has been wrong with Canadian economics.

Some who do little work think farmers should labor seven days per week. Most men require at least one day's rest per week. Many city occupations are deserted by those who work at them, for a half holiday each week besides Sunday, and yet some of those who so take recreation at the lakeside or ball park, or elsewhere, think the farmer should work eighteen hours a day seven days in the week. He couldn't stand it. But there is this about the suggestion. It might be well to so arrange the law that it would not be an offence to save a crop, which might otherwise be lost, by working a Sunday now and again. On the whole, however, it is foolish to expect much increase from working seven days instead of six. And, moreover, the Sabbath day should be kept.

Price-Fixing and Food Control.

At this stage of the crisis through which Canada is passing, with the other nations engaged in the gigantic world conflict staged on the battlefields of Europe, we hear a great deal about price control of food products and other commodities. Fixing prices is a big task for the government of any nation to assume, and it is wise to move cautiously and only after full consideration has been given to all details. Fixing food prices is a problem with far-reaching ramifications. Labor enters into production; so does machinery; so does feed; so do many other things. A fixing which might seem fair to one class or one commodity might not be at all equitable when another class or another commodity is considered. A case in point is that of price fixing in the Old Land where the producer of whole milk for immediate consumption had a comparatively low price placed on his product, while no restrictions were placed on the price of feed he was compelled to buy. We cite this simply to illustrate the difficulty of equitable price setting. In Britain the results of the attempts made to control prices have led our Scottish correspondent to state in a recent letter: "The effect of much of the control work that is going on is bewildering, and it is doubtful whether the nation is benefiting to any great extent from interference with the free play of commerce." We mention these facts that those in authority in Canada may weigh carefully the import of any action they may take.

Two reasons have been given for price-control by our Government. We may give them as they have been stated in the United States:

"1. To prevent consumers being forced to pay oppressive prices because of manipulation, speculation, and inadequate or disorganized transportation.

"2. To meet any emergency that might arise from local or national overproduction or by manipulation or uneconomic speculation in order that producers may not suffer loss on account of the extraordinary efforts they are being urged to make."

Food-price regulation is recommended that the farmer may be assured of high prices, and that the consumer may expect lower prices. It looks paradoxical doesn't it? Some believe that setting a minimum price would be a big factor toward greater production. Others think that setting a maximum price would give them cheaper food. Suppose the Government sets both—what would happen? The minimum would doubtless be the highest price anyone would pay, and what Government would care to set a high minimum price for consumers? If a maximum price were set it would not be very encouraging to capital. Regulating commerce by government orders is not the easiest task in the world. Most plans born of the price-boycott mobs are unworkable and have not the least semblance of economic justification. Many are not sure but that price-control increases rather than remedies the evil that it is intended to eliminate. The New York Sun says: "It stimulates consumption and makes scarcity of supply permanent." There might be more good to follow a regulation of consumption than a regulation of prices.

The object of a minimum price to producers is to stimulate production of staple food products by assuring farmers that they will not sell below a certain level, high enough to give them a reasonable return in any event. The only object of maximum prices would be to govern distribution of products. These would not be set to producers, but would be used to control any unnecessary manipulation or speculation carried on between the producer and the consumer. The only justification for establishing maximum prices is to put a stop to gambling by speculators in food products. A fixing of maximum prices for foodstuffs on a large scale would limit rather than increase production.

Those who have watched the trend of events point out that no one was anxious to establish minimum

prices to protect the producer when prices were exceedingly low. Governments and all others must remember that the man who produces the food by which the nation lives would have no reason to ask for minimum prices or any control if he were always assured of an open, competitive market, unhampered by the speculator and the various manipulations through which farm products pass before they reach the ultimate consumer. Under such conditions the consumer could have no reasonable grounds for complaint. If he thinks farming a profitable business he could go farming. Farmers have no corner or monopoly on land or food stuffs.

It would be well, also, for all to remember that the farmer is human as well as the consumer. The only one not coming in this class, if such there be, is the speculator who takes advantage of abnormal conditions to make money at the expense of both of the foregoing classes. A Chicago paper suggests that "food supply shouters" have a conference with the weather man, and in reference to the cry for cheaper food says: "Unfortunately much of the current agitation for food reduction cost is carried on by people not acquainted with facts and indifferent on that score. The movement has degenerated into a noise—mere hue and cry, assuming that the farmer is the delinquent, whereas he has been handicapped by drouth, frost and other vicissitudes." The farmer sows, but the weather is a big factor in what he reaps. The farmer works harder than ninety per cent. of those who complain that he does not do enough. He is in two shifts of eight hours each day, and gets no half holidays at the park or lake. It is a mistake to blame the farmer for conditions over which he has no control. It costs him more to produce than it ever did. Meat, milk and eggs, for instance, have not advanced in price in anything like the same ratio as have the feeds which are required to produce them. The price of labor has advanced on the farms and in the cities. The average farmer cannot afford to pay wages on a par with those offered in certain city business, and especially in certain abnormal business incident to the war. Here is what a Massachusetts farmer thinks of it: "If our farmers and poultrymen were paid for their labor at the same rates that are now paid to carpenters, plumbers, garage mechanics and their helpers, the citizens of Boston would have to pay 30 cents a quart for milk, \$1.75 per dozen for eggs, and \$1.50 per pound for poultry meat." A similar situation obtains in rural and urban Canada.

These figures are worth looking over and considering. When feed and labor get beyond the profitable mark to the producer, unusual numbers of breeding stock and poultry go to the market, and efforts are made to produce other foodstuffs.

Then there are those who would prohibit the sale of calves and let them all grow up to mature animals for slaughter. More hysteria! Many calves would consume more food fit for human consumption, let alone roughage, than their skinny carcasses would be worth at three years of age. The person who doesn't know that some calves will pay to feed to maturity, while others are only profitable from the standpoint of the nation as well as the feeder sold as veal, better not advise. The place for culls and hundreds of dairy-bred calves is veal. Even meatless days do not conserve food. If not meat, people eat something else. In Britain they tried to save the calves by legislation, now they kill the culls to save human food. If it is unprofitable for the farmer to feed a poor-doing calf, it is bad business for the country.

The attitude which any government should take toward price fixing in times like these should be based largely upon the needs and the people. If speculators or others manipulate things for their own selfish interests, then it may be necessary for Jack Canuck to take a hand, but if speculation in foodstuffs were put