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EDITORIAL.

Public Ownership.

We have been hearing for a couple of years past that public ownership is "in the air," and that it will be the panacea for all the economic ills to which a trust-racked, ill-served and taxation-burdened people are subject. Mr. James Dalrymple, manager of the street railway system of Glasgow, Scotland, which has been so successful under that system, has been looking into the feasibility of applying it in Chicago, at the request of Mayor Dunne, who was elected on a public-ownership platform. After going carefully over the situation in the "Windy City" and other American towns, he has boldly declared that if the street railway business is conducted on political lines, then the attempt is doomed to failure. "You must not," he asserts, "permit politics to interfere with it in the slightest degree. To put street railways, gas works, telephone companies, etc., under municipal ownership, would be to create a political machine in every large city that would be simply impregnable. These political machines are already strong enough with their control of policemen, firemen, and other office-holders. If in addition to this they control the thousands of men employed in the great public utility corporations, the political machines would have a power that could not be overthrown. I came to this country advocating public ownership. What I have seen here and what I have studied carefully makes me realize that private ownership under proper conditions is far better for the citizens of American cities."

The political system in vogue in the United States is now very generally in vogue in Canada, and how to eliminate "politics" from the operation of Government-owned railways or telephones is a conundrum hard to solve, but when the people realize gross inefficiency and excessive charges in the operation of these utilities, the uprising would result in an educational campaign that in time would bring about the remedy proposed. In the meantime, what is called "public ownership," would, in reality, be party ownership, or ownership by about one-half of the people. It has been said that the late Sir John A. Macdonald once declared that the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway would keep the party with which he was identified in power for twenty years, and the prediction has been repeated in connection with the Grand Trunk Pacific, in regard to the party which has succeeded to the administration of public affairs in Canada. The unexpected sometimes happens, and at all events the "Farmer's Advocate" is not called upon to pass upon the merits of the forecast in question. There is little doubt that, under present political conditions on this continent, a party having control of the three great railway systems of Canada, for example, would be in a position to so entrench itself that nothing short of a revolution could dislodge it from power. Government regulation, as illustrated in the working of the Canadian Railway Commission, would appear to be a more hopeful and less risky plan for the people than Government ownership. If the men directing the affairs of these corporations keep their ear to the ground and discern aright the signs of the times, they can probably indefinitely postpone the plunge into public ownership, by respecting the rights of the people in the use of the utilities towards which they have so largely contributed to create.

Farmers and the Beef Industry.

It is frequently asserted that the trouble with the Canadian beef industry is the want of farm help and the continuance of the British embargo on our cattle. We are of the opinion that a more serious disability than either of these is the want of enough good cattle to enable us to secure the best prices in the British market, where we have to compete with other countries, and are taking a second or third place, where, by good management, we might take the lead and hold it.

The secret of success in all lines of business in these times lies in the economical production of the best quality of goods, and placing them on the market in the most attractive and satisfactory form and condition. We know of no country where the conditions, on the whole, for the production of first-class cattle are more favorable than in Canada. The climate is conducive to the best of health; diseases of cattle are practically unknown; the soil is suitable to the growth of a wide variety of the best of stock foods, at a moderate outlay of labor and expense; building material for comfortable stabling is not unduly expensive, and the farm buildings are of a higher average character than in any other country of which we have knowledge. Farmers now have little work to do in winter, other than the feeding and care of stock, and those who keep beef cattle have less work than those engaged in dairying, thousands of whom are making good money by milking cows, and finding it a safe and profitable business where brains as well as muscle are put into it, intelligent care being given to the breeding, selection and feeding of the cows and the management of the product. One of the principal difficulties in connection with the help problem arises from the fact that farmers, as a rule, plan to employ help only in the summer months, and turn the men adrift on the approach of winter, when they go into towns, where the best of them find steady work, and are lost to the farm, whereas, if the farmers arranged their business so as to feed stock, and thus find employment for the men the year round, they would be much more likely to secure reliable and trained help that would stay with them. And the raising of well-bred cattle and feeding them to a finish for the best markets, is the best possible means of keeping up the fertility of the farm and its capability to produce paying crops.

Canadian farmers will never cut a very creditable figure in the world's markets while content to raise mongrel cattle and cater to a second-class stocker trade, which is evidently the extent of the ambition of those who are clamoring for the removal of the embargo. Were the same interest and energy manifested in improving the character of our cattle by good breeding and judicious feeding, the welfare of the farmers of this country would be vastly more substantially enhanced. We would thus be wrestling with a problem over which we might be certain of having some influence and control, instead of expending our breath in the endeavor to persuade the British people that they owe us a debt of gratitude for being their offspring, and that for this they should give our cattle a preference over those of other countries, by admitting them alive and half-grown at pedlar's prices, to be finished by the farmers of the Old Country, who would pocket the profit, while we would haul our grain and hay to town and sell it, perchance, on a glutted market, in competition with the cheaply-grown product of the prairie lands, to be shipped after the cattle to be fed to our stock by the

British farmer, whose land would receive the benefit of the resulting fertility while our farms were steadily running down. Does anybody suppose that the Scotchmen who are engineering the campaign against the embargo in the Old Country are doing it for our benefit?

This may be regarded as an extreme portrayal of the prospect, but we are persuaded there is more truth than poetry in the picture of probabilities drawn. At any rate, we are convinced that relief from the disabilities of the beef industry does not lie in the direction of the development of a stocker trade, but rather in the improvement of our cattle by the use of pure-bred sires of approved type, and keeping our young cattle growing and improving from calf-hood to maturity, instead of allowing them to lose in winter all the flesh they gained in summer, requiring most of another summer's grazing to bring them up to where they were the year before, as is the common course pursued.

The misfits of the dairy breeds may well supply the local butchers and the stocker trade, but those who profess to raise beef cattle should entertain a higher ambition, and aim to excel by producing and preparing for the market the best of the kind, and more of them, so that our exporters will not have to be going periodically to Chicago to get enough good animals to keep the trade moving. How in the name of common sense is Canada going to build up the export dressed-meat trade we hear so much about, in addition to exporting beeves alive, at the present rate of progress?

What's the Matter with the Dairy Business?

Mr. G. H. Barr, secretary of the Western Dairy Association, at a recent Ontario cheese-factory meeting, in discussing the waning of interest in dairying, and the decrease of the milk supply in the locality, gave these three reasons:

1. Lack of farm help.
2. Farmers becoming too well off.
3. Poor cows.

The force of the first reason will be freely conceded; in fact, we sometimes think people are prone to exaggerate its relative importance. Wages have advanced all round, and while a day's pay now may be a little higher in proportion to the value of a pound of butter or cheese than was the case eight or ten years ago, the difference is not so very great after all. And, while dairying involves a greater amount of labor than some other lines of farming, is it not true that, when managed reasonably well, the returns are also greater. Dairying has always been and may still be regarded as one of the best ways to make the most out of an acre of land. If so, the dairyman should be at least as well able to pay the enhanced wages asked as other farmers engaged in less remunerative lines. There is this thought to be brought out, however, that it is not so much the price, but the kind of labor procurable, that acts as a deterrent upon the dairyman. During the past decade of advancing wages, the rise has been relatively faster in the city than in the country, consequently the cream of the rural laborers has been skimmed closer than usual, leaving an inferior class of hired men in the country, and inefficient help is admittedly more of a handicap in dairying than in most other lines. The main hope of a remedy lies in the introduction of improved facilities, such as the milking machine, to divest the occupation of some of its irksomeness, at the same time enabling the dairyman to minimize the effects of poor help. Rough work may be done by rough