

Fair Play for the Producer.

A subscriber down in Quebec sends us the following clipping from "The Christian Herald" and the matter is so to the point that we thought it worthy of reproduction in our columns even though it does refer specifically to United States conditions.

"The farmer is not in a position to make prices to suit himself, if he were so inclined. To bring the point before you, I will ask you who makes the prices on all farm products? Are they not made by a few men in your cities? Are they not made by men who are members of your Chambers of Commerce? Have you ever known of any board of farmers demanding a certain price? Do you know that the farmer is the only producer that has no voice in the selling price of his product? He takes what is offered, and that regardless of the cost of production, in many instances.

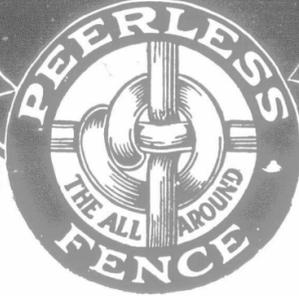
"Some time ago the meat-packers, while in convention in Cincinnati, had the question put to them, who would stand the loss if an embargo was placed on meat products. It was agreed that an embargo would affect the prices; but the speaker said it made no difference to them, as they merely acted as a clearing-house between the farmer and the consumer, and that the loss would have to fall to the farmer or producer. He was honest, at least, and he left no doubts in our mind on the point. But why should the producer saddle the burden? Why not divide the loss with the packers?"

"The writer of this letter has not always lived on a Dakota prairie farm. He went to work with the whistle and he has seen about thirty-five years of the ups and downs of life in a large city. He has been one of the dinner-pail squad. I was one of many who thought that everything the farmer sold grew on trees, and that the woods were full of them. Since leaving the city, I have learned that I knew little or nothing of the questions the farmer meets with. You asked us to raise a big crop. We answer that a big crop cannot be raised at a profit to us. That seems strange, doesn't it? It can easily be proven. The crop of 1913, which was regarded as the largest crop this country ever produced, was raised at a loss to the farmers of the northwest. Why? Because we got for it less than the cost of production. We were at the mercy of a few city people. Had we had a voice in the price of that crop, we would have had at least a fair margin of profit for our labor. As it was, that crop left a bad taste with us.

"When any one is asked to put special efforts into anything he is promised some special reward. You promise us the everlasting gratitude of the people in the cities. The reward in itself is worth striving for. But allow me to ask you how we farmers are going to buy and pay for your high-priced city manufactured goods, of which we are large consumers? We will have the everlasting gratitude, it is true, and we will also have a beggarly price for our crop. Will the city people come to our rescue and, instead of asking us to pay them for their products of the factories and mills at the present rate of eight hours' work and ten hours' pay, will they let us have their products at the rate of twelve hours' work and ten hours' pay? The farmer fails to see why he should work from daylight till dark, without ever thinking of the half or full holidays that the city man never overlooks, and with no more reward than the good wishes of the city people.

"You may think that the writer is heartless. Oh, no; I have sisters and brothers, as well as an old father and mother, who are feeling the effects of the high prices. However, that does not keep me from thinking that the pill that is being swallowed in the cities is bearing the city trademark. As long as the people in our cities want to get all they can, and do as little as they can in getting it, they must expect the other fellows to do the same thing. The farmer has to contend with the weather conditions in his efforts. He has a

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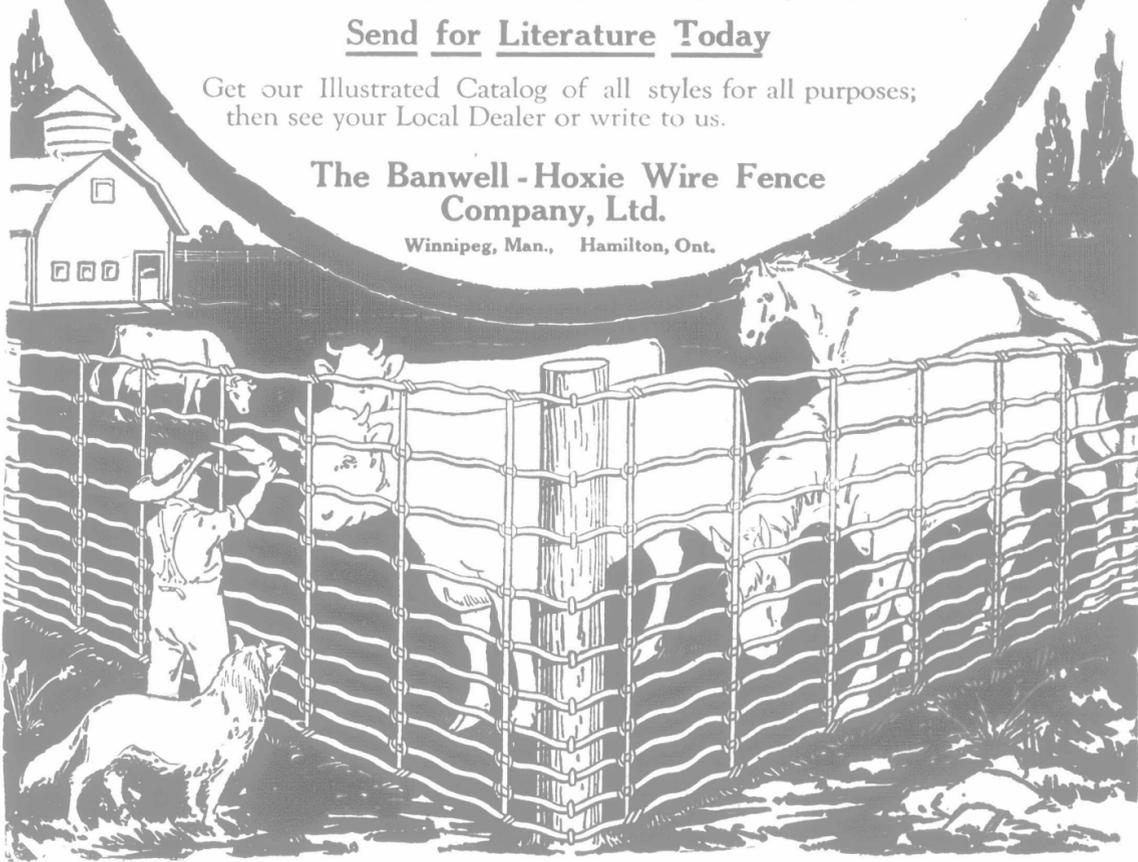
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