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EDITORIAL.

The Relation of the Factory Instructor to the Patron.

Few of us appreciate what the Dairy Inspector has done since the days of Prof. Arnold, down to the present, to improve Canada's position in the British cheese market. We have been wont to attribute our success mainly to co-operation, overlooking the fact that mere factory manufacture, without a general system of instruction, would have failed to secure that uniform excellence necessary to the building up of a national reputation, wherein lies the only hope of assuring profitable employment for the man who milks the cow. Uniformity has been the call trumpeted across the Atlantic ever since we began to figure in British dairy markets—uniformity in quality, color, salting, style, package; in fact, uniformity all round. High average merit will not avail without it. When we reflect that the British distributor handles wholesale quantities of produce from all parts of the world, and that there must be but small chance of the make of any factory being placed regularly before the same set of consumers, it is plain that to create and hold in the consumer's mind the favorable prejudice, recognized as such an important factor in modern trade, we must do everything possible to guarantee that all goods labeled Canadian shall be right up to the mark in quality, and uniform, so that the purchaser may depend always on finding beneath our brand just what he expects. Fool him a few times and he concludes the country's make is unreliable. Thus, in a cosmopolitan market like that of Britain, the blame for inferior butter or cheese falls not directly upon the producer, but upon the trade of the country or province whence the goods purport to come. Recognizing this fact, the enterprising Dairymen's Associations of Ontario years ago adopted the system of appointing instructors, who visit the factories, offering practical suggestions where needed, in the hope of raising the average quality of the product. Last year there were over thirty instructors in the Province, and this year the number will be considerably increased. The explanation of the number is the good that they have been able to accomplish, and this in turn is due to the selection of competent men, and the charging of a fee to the factories desiring their visits. Were the instruction given altogether gratis, it might not be so highly esteemed or so fruitful in results. Until this year the charge has been uniform, but it is now proposed in the Western Association to put it on a sliding scale, the larger factories paying a slightly larger fee. It is hoped by this means to introduce instruction into quarters where it is much needed, but would probably not be asked for at the higher rate.

During the past two years special efforts have been put forth for the benefit of makers, with a special view to the adoption of uniform methods of manufacture. To this end the instructors were required to attend a special dairy school class for the purpose. Methods were thoroughly discussed point by point, until a common practice was agreed upon in every step down to the last detail, and the instructors have since been inculcating these into the minds of the makers they have visited. The result has been a general improvement in manufacture and a gratifying approach to uniformity of product. It has been customary for the instructor to spend the major part of the day at the factory, watching the day's operations, in which he assists, offering pointers and making milk and curd tests. If the test showed it necessary, a drive to a few farms would

follow. It may be noted that there have been no prosecutions by the Western instructors for two years, the aim being to improve conditions by persuasion and education. The result of this conciliatory policy is an improved attitude towards the instructor, the patron's former suspicion that he was a sort of spy giving way to the understanding that he is a valuable aid to the maker, and perchance to the patron himself.

During the ensuing year the Association contemplates rather a new line of work. Having improved things pretty radically in the factories, it is considered time to do a little more systematic work among the patrons, by having the instructor spend his time in house-to-house visits among them. In cream-gathering districts it may be feasible for him to accompany the driver. While the latter is weighing and sampling the cream, time would be afforded to note the conditions of the dairy and yard, and for some helpful conversation. In cheese sections a rig would have to be secured, and the farms visited in company with the factoryman or someone else locally acquainted. It would seem a good plan also to hold evening meetings sometimes in the less busy seasons. By this visitation the instructors would be brought into practical touch with farm conditions, and much good information could be diffused, not only from their own store of knowledge, but through the opportunity to pick up and convey practical pointers from one farmer to another.

To hold our own in the British cheese market and capture a larger share of the butter trade, we must continually improve both in production and manufacture. The example is properly expected from the factorymen, as there is no use having first-class milk spoiled by a poor maker. The factorymen, however, are now, for the most part, a pretty competent and progressive class. It remains for the farmer to do his part by greater care and religious observance of the all-important requisite, cleanliness. With faithful effort all round there is no limit to the development of the dairy business in Canada; but we must work harmoniously, and especially this season, with the contemplated programme of instruction, it is desirable that the best relations should exist among instructors, patrons and makers.

A Prize Farm Competition.

As an incentive to the more general adoption by farmers of improved methods of cultivation and care of their holdings, a systematic rotation of crops, and a consequent increase of the fertility of their land, together with a greater amount of attention to improving their live stock and the general appearance of their farms, it was suggested in these columns a few weeks ago that a renewal of the practice of offering prizes for the best conducted farms might well be adopted by the Provincial Departments of Agriculture somewhat on the lines pursued by the Agriculture and Arts Association of Ontario some years ago. The system adopted at that time was to offer medals of varying value for the first, second and third best kept farms in districts or groups of counties, into which the Province was divided, one or two of such districts being taken up each year, and when all had been judged, the first-prize farms in each district were pitted against each other for a championship trophy. A keen interest was taken in this friendly competition, which had a stimulating effect, not only upon those who were successful in securing prizes, but upon all who entered for them, and also upon many who, profiting by observation of their methods, or by reading the published reports of the judges on the

different farms, were led to adopt in their own practice some of the features of the most successful systems. A good example has an improving effect in farming, as well as in morals and character building. This has often been exemplified in the matter of planting trees, in fencing, in the care of buildings, the cutting of weeds, the draining of a swamp or slack place in a field, and in many other ways, involving no greater expense than the general farmer can afford, and proving a profitable investment.

County agricultural societies, or even township societies, might take up this work to advantage for local competition, and the Ontario Provincial Department of Agriculture could well utilize existing machinery for carrying out the idea on the larger scale, while other provinces might profit from the example. We suggest that the Minister of Agriculture take the initiative, and that the President of the Agricultural College, the Superintendent of the Farmers' Institutes and the Superintendent of Fairs might safely be entrusted with the working out of the details of the scheme, including the selection of judges. In the event of action being taken along these lines, a timely announcement should precede the commencement of the competition, and if the commencement is to be held a year from this spring, the heads we have indicated or others equally furnished with good gray matter, should, if possible, be brought together in the very near future for the consideration of the subject.

Another Idea Exploited as a Fad.

For some time past the press has contained frequent reference to the new so-called "fertilizer," nitro-culture, which is simply a culture in yeast-cake form of any one of the several species of nitrogen-gathering bacteria which are found in the nodules on the roots of leguminous plants. As usual with these discoveries, some extravagant claims are being made by the numerous firms which are now undertaking to supply the culture commercially. The fact is no results worth mentioning need be expected from application to soil where the legume for which it is to be used has previously grown, as such soil is already inoculated. On soil where clover or alfalfa has not recently grown, nitro-culture might be worth trying, but we would not advise a farmer to spend money on it till it has been further tested at our experimental farms and elsewhere. Good cultivation, short rotation, and barn-yard manure, supplemented with ashes, and perhaps a little mineral fertilizer for the special benefit of the legumes, may always be depended upon for results, and with such methods artificial inoculation is likely to prove an unnecessary expense.

Free Fencing Wire.

Untaxed fence wire means a benefit to the farmers of Canada, and a benefit, too, to the fence manufacturers whose raw material the wire is. The taxing of the wire would mean the imposition of a burden upon the farmers, and would be a blow to the fence-manufacturing industry as well. The demand for such taxation would be a typical instance of the injustice of high protectionism—or "adequate" protection, as the makers of such demands always prefer to say; their modest idea of the adequacy of the tariff tax they want the Government to impose being that it should be high enough to secure them against outside competition, and give the Canadian consumer into their hands. The protest made in advance by the "Farmer's Advocate" is as sound and fair as it is vigorous, and has the complete endorsement of the Free Press.—[Winnipeg Free Press.]