

WILL THE FARMER BENEFIT?

View of a Legislator who Represents an Ontario Farm Constituency

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INDIRECTLY the business of every class in the country will be affected by reciprocity, but its effect will be felt more directly by the farmer than any other class in the country, because of the duties being entirely removed from all kinds of farm produce. The comparatively low duties imposed by Canada on the imports of farm products have had the effect of steadying the market prices, and hence there has not been the fluctuation in prices that otherwise must and would follow if imports were free. The effect was also to assure this splendid home market to the Canadian farmer. Prices for horses, cattle, hogs, sheep, butter, eggs, poultry, fruits of all kinds, and indeed nearly all kinds of farm produce, have been very satisfactory.

From a careful investigation of the mass of evidence available, the impartial seeker after truth is forced to the conclusion that in a general way the Canadian farmer will not be benefited by this proposition, if it goes into force. Locally in some sections of the country on some lines of products, it may benefit a few; but generally speaking it is plain that it would not be a good thing for the farmer. It must be apparent, however, to every true Canadian (and that means a true Britisher) that a view as broad as the Dominion must be taken of the question, and how it will affect trade from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and what will be the effect in the future on trade already established, and which may have taken years of care and thought and diligent pursuit in all its details, to bring to its present state of perfection. This can be illustrated perhaps better by taking one specific line of product and seeing how it will work out.

The Price of Hogs

The hog is at the present time one of the great staple products of the farmers of Canada, yielding a revenue to them of about \$20,000,000 per year. It has taken years for the farmers to bring to its present state of perfection the science of how to breed and feed so as to produce the best type of bacon hog. Likewise it has taken the packers years to learn just how to handle hogs so as to make the most and best out of them. The Government has also found it necessary to have a watchful eye over the industry, so that the product of other countries in hog produce could not be sold as Canadian. The result of all this care has been that Canadian bacon is of a better quality than that of any other country, excepting, perhaps, Holland.

It is claimed that the Canadian farmer under this proposition will have another market for his hogs, and that will be true if the Americans will pay even a slightly higher price than is paid by the

Canadian buyer, which they without doubt will do if even only to close up the Canadian packing-houses. In that case Canadian packers will have to either close up business or go into the American combine. In either case our hog prices will then be fixed on the United States Meat Trust, which is not a pleasant outlook for the Canadian farmer. But a comparison of prices shows that the Canadian farmer has been getting better prices than the American. The following figures, which are absolutely correct (proof of which can be furnished, if necessary) are the prices the drovers have been paid by the packers at the points named for the past four years, two of the principal hog markets in the United States and two in Canada:

Year.	Buffalo.	Chicago.	Toronto.	Hull.
1907	6.67	6.10	6.94	7.02
1908	6.22	5.70	6.57	6.79
1909	7.92	7.35	8.06	8.55
1910	9.58	8.90	9.13	9.30
Average ...	7.60	7.02	7.68	7.92

It will thus be seen that Canadian prices for the past four years have averaged better than United States, and that farmers have nothing better to hope for in hog prices in the United States if reciprocity is adopted.

Horse Prices Compared

Another of the staple products of the farmer is horses, of which much the same can be said as of the hog. Years of careful selection and breeding has been necessary to bring the supply and the quality up to its present high standard. The three great markets for the Ontario and Quebec horses are, the demand in the cities, the lumber woods, and the Canadian West. The Canadian Census and Statistics monthly, January, 1911, and the United States Crop Reporter, February, 1911, is authority for the following prices:

The average price per horse in United States	\$108.19
The average price per horse in Canada ...	133.00
The average price per horse in New York State	125.00
The average price per horse in Ontario...	133.00

It will thus be seen that Canadian prices are better than the United States. Probably horses bring the stock farmer in these eastern provinces more money than any other product, unless perhaps hogs. There are more horses in four of the north-western States adjacent to our western provinces than in the whole of Canada. Being so much nearer our Canadian West, these horses will supply our

western trade, and the lumber camps of New Ontario will be supplied from Michigan and Wisconsin. To offset this there will probably be some demand from New York, but at lower prices from the way horses are now selling. Our horse-raising business under the reciprocity proposition thus will not likely be as profitable as at present.

Dairy Prices Compared

In connection with the dairy industry, by a comparison of prices, it is found that milk cows are worth more per head here than in the States adjoining us on the south, as the following prices taken from the same authorities show:

Average price of milch cows in United States	\$35.79
Average price of milch cows in Canada ..	43.00
Average price of milch cows in New York State	39.50
Average price of milch cows in Ontario..	48.00
Highest price in any State in Illinois	42.80

It will thus be seen that sales of milch cows average higher in Ontario than in any State of the Union, and higher in Ontario than across the line in New York State, and the Canadian average price is \$7.21 higher than in the United States. The return also shows that the average price of other cattle than milch cows is \$19.41 in the United States, as against \$31.00 in Canada.

The dairy industry in Canada has assumed large proportions mainly because of the ever-increasing demand in all the industrial centres for cheese, butter, milk and cream. The quality has improved very much in late years, which of itself has been an important factor in increasing the demand. This splendid home market has been a great source of income for the farmers, as prices for quite a long period have been good. Notwithstanding the increase in the quality of dairy products and eggs produced by our farmers, a large quantity during the past winter has been imported, and after paying a duty has undersold our own product, which is the principal reason for prices going down. This will be much more felt if this reciprocity proposition comes into effect. This will in turn have the effect of largely curtailing the Canadian output, as many farmers cannot produce except at a loss owing to the scarcity and dearness of labour.

The present duty on all farm products which is comparatively low assures to quite a degree the home market to the Canadian farmer, and has a steadying effect on supply and demand. The question is, would it be in the interest of the farmer or the consumer to have this steadiness of trade interfered with? It does not look like it.

The reciprocity proposition is, however, too big a subject to treat properly in an article for the press, as only the fringe has been touched in the foregoing. To an impartial observer it looks as though this pact would not be in the interest of the Canadian farmer.

WHERE THE GREAT CEREMONY WILL TAKE PLACE



If you were a wealthy American, or even an ambitious Canadian, you would go over to London this month and pay an exorbitant price for an uncomfortable seat in one of these rude "stands" which surround and almost obscure Westminster Abbey. It will be a grand sight, that pageant of a new King, but the photographs of it in the "Canadian Courier" Coronation Numbers will give much consolation to us who stay at home.

Photo by "Topical"