

The Canadian Farmer and Preferential Trade.

Would preferential trade within the British Empire be beneficial to the Canadian farmer? Here is a scheme which is among the possibilities of the near future, and it behooves the farmers of Canada to look well to their interests, so that if they be asked to express an opinion on the question, or mark their ballots for or against the proposal, they may do so intelligently.

In the first place, what is preferential trade? It is merely the lowering of the duties or taxes upon imports by any country in favor of the products of any other country. Thus, on Canadian wheat going to the United States for consumption, a duty of almost fifty per cent. of its value is levied. The result is that very little wheat is disposed of in that way. Now, under a preferential tariff, part or all of this duty would be remitted, while at the same time wheat from other countries would continue to pay the fifty per cent. tax. In other words, Canadian wheat would have a preferred position in the United States market.

Now, apply this to the British Empire. Great Britain, for economic reasons, has for the past fifty years allowed foodstuffs to be placed upon her markets almost free from duty. Foodstuffs from Canada, United States, Russia and Argentina met upon equal terms. But with preferential trade all this would be changed, and a tax would be levied on products coming from countries outside the Empire, while those from the colonies would still be admitted free.

How would this treatment affect the farmers of Canada? They, in conjunction with their brother farmers in other colonies, would capture a market which is now open to the world. The selling price of any article is regulated by the supply and the demand. If the supply is limited and the demand is great the price will be high. Suppose Britain imposed an average tax of 10% on foodstuffs from outside the Empire, the colonial farmer would then have such a decided advantage in the British market that he could hold it without difficulty. If the prices of foodstuffs in Britain remained the same as now the foreign farmer would receive the present price, less the duty, which would so reduce his profits that he would be forced out of the race. But the demand in Britain would be the same; it is a constant quantity. Therefore, as the foreign supply lessened, the colonial supply must either increase or prices will be raised. In either case, the Canadian farmer would gain. Until the price of foodstuffs was raised to the present level, plus the duty, the colonials could easily hold the market, and afterwards would still have the 10% duty more profit than their competitors.

Now, is the market worth capturing? Take, for example, butter, a representative Canadian product. In 1902 Canada exported to Britain about 32 million pounds of butter. The total amount imported into Britain that year was in round numbers 445 million pounds, so that Canada sent about 7.19 per cent. of the whole. The other colonies sent about 6%, and foreign countries provided the remainder. Under a preferential tariff almost the whole of this immense trade would fall to Canada.

The Canadian bacon trade is a good example of the effects of the British market. A few years ago bacon was almost unsalable in Canada, and the possibility of disposing of live hogs at \$7.00 per cwt. was never mentioned. Yet, to-day this price is not considered beyond reach. What caused the change? The Canadians captured the British market. The lesson should not pass unheeded.

But there is another side to the question. If Britain gives the colonies a market for foodstuffs, they must throw open their markets to British factories. What effect would this have upon Canadian industry? Some one portion of the world is better situated than any other place for the manufacture of a certain article. What made Britain the factory of the world? Britain was better situated than any other country to become such. What makes Manitoba the wheat field of the world? Manitoba has more favorable conditions than any other country. So, if conditions in Britain are such that certain articles can be manufactured there cheaper and better than here, our factories will suffer. Take the woollen trade: Undoubtedly, with cheaper labor, etc., Britain must capture the woollen trade, but will the Canadian farmer suffer? The demand for woollen goods is constant, and it is not affected by one woollen mill being closed. The supply is affected, and another mill will be built in a more suitable locality. The demand for wool in a raw state is equally great during the change, and if the farmer is now paying a tax, either by getting a smaller price for raw wool or paying a high price for the manufactured article because of poorly located factories, he will benefit by the change. True economy is secured by a judicial handling of all the factors in an enterprise, and in the end true economy benefits the great mass of the people more by placing woollen goods on the market

under the best conditions than false economy by locating a woollen mill where a few will profit.

But, on the other hand, the Canadian manufacturers of woollen articles would welcome the preferential tariff, because it would give them a better market.

Apparently, the Canadian farmer need have no fear of preferential trade.

Dufferin Co., Ont. JOHN S. BRUNDIGE.

Not for Joseph.

To the Editor "Farmer's Advocate":

Sir,—An editorial, entitled "The Preferential Propaganda," in your Dec. 1st issue, calls for comment, and I crave your indulgence in replying. In the first place, it may be pointed out that the Southern Standard, in describing New Zealand as a producing country, wrongly implies that England (or some other country which buys from N. Z.) is not a producing country. The meaning intended, or which should be intended, is that N. Zealand is a producer of a certain class of articles, while England is a producer of a certain other class of articles, and that, consequently, a trade, or interchange of commodities, is possible between them. So, when the Standard speaks of the "Vast producing areas of Canada, etc.," it is thinking of food products; but the producer of clothing or tools is no less a producer than one who grows wheat, and he should not be put in the obnoxious category of non-producers, of whom there are, it must be admitted, everywhere too many.

With so much promised, it may be taken for granted, in the Standard's words, that "it is difficult to see how a system of reciprocity is going to injure any class of the Empire's subjects." Reciprocal trade is a measure of free trade, and so far facilitates the proper interchange of commodities. But the trouble with the Imperial Preferential Tariff plan is that it proposes to encourage trade between members of an Empire scattered and separated geographically, commercially, racially, and in almost every way except the accidental political one, at the expense of discouraging trade between countries connected geographically, commercially, racially, and in almost every way except the accidental political one. Any proposition to encourage trade within the Empire should be heartily endorsed, but when there is implied a discouragement of trade without the Empire, some of which is of vastly more importance than Imperial trade, then we should cry halt.

Therefore, in my judgment, Mr. Chamberlain's heroism dwindles to something very paltry and insignificant, as, indeed, one would expect who knew anything of his history. He may be stirring the heart of England, but it is not the heart of sober England. Claptrap sandwich men parading the streets of Birmingham, and all that sort of thing, does not indicate anything but a sort of economic squall, due, perhaps, in part to the laudable generosity of those countries which dump their goods in England; which dumping has contributed much towards England's riches, and which the people who don't think for themselves are being persuaded to reject. I fear that the robe of heroism has considerably cheapened when Mr. Chamberlain's fiscal splurge entitles him to be so clothed.

You say, too, that "Preferential treatment by Britain of Colonial agricultural products would be a great boon to the Canadian farmer." Perhaps. But such treatment necessitates Britain's shutting her doors to the rest of the world, and perhaps the British food consumer would object to paying us more for our butter, beef and bacon than he can buy them for elsewhere. Perhaps, even his "patriotism" or love for the Empire will not go as far down as his pocket. Canadian manufacturers, also, might be unwilling to concede the reciprocal advantages and have Canada thrown open to British cloth, tools, etc. Their loudly-voiced expressions of loyalty to the mother country might not touch them so deeply as to render them generous, or even fair, towards the British manufacturer. We must give if we expect to get a preference, and most people ignore the giving and clamor for the getting.

You say, finally, that the Canadian farmer is doing marvellously well, and in your leading editorial speak of the cheapening in the cost of transportation as removing one of the farmers' problems. In view of the facts brought to light at the recent meeting of the Fruit-growers' Association, it would seem that the transportation problem is yet a live one, which must be solved before the farmer can justly be said to be doing marvellously well. He is doing as well as he can under the burdens which he has to bear, and he should look sharp lest Mr. Chamberlain's scheme add another to his already overtaxed strength.

Brant Co., Ont.

W. C. GOOD.

Careless Writers.

Last year we called our readers' attention to the many complaints from those who advertise with us, that during the year they get many thousands of letters which are deficient in address. Either the state is left off, or no town or county is given, and many letters are without a name signed to them, or if it is signed it is done with such haste and carelessness as to be unintelligible. It should be remembered that it is far easier to read a poorly-written letter than it is to decipher the name; consequently, the utmost care should be taken to write the name slowly and carefully, without any flourishes. Flourishes are actually an abomination. Another source of annoyance and delay in making returns is the carelessness or lack of knowledge on the part of the shippers sending goods to market, in not putting the shipper's address as well as the firm you ship to on the bundle or box. Besides this, the shipper should send the original or duplicate receipt, and letters of advice describing the shipment; and be sure to stamp the envelope. Some neglect this, and some put on only a one-cent stamp. Such letters go to the dead-letter office. In conversation with the Northwestern Hide and Fur Co., of Minneapolis, Minnesota, recently, they informed us that they had several hundred statements of hides, furs, etc., awaiting claimants for want of proper address. If any of our readers are among this list of shippers, write them at once. They do not want goods for nothing, neither does any other honest firm.

Post-Graduate Course for Farmers' Sons.

By David Lawrence.

Doctors and trained nurses take post-graduate courses and believe that they derive great benefit therefrom, and why should not farmers' sons?

Let us discuss the matter. Very many of our farmers' sons are brought up on the home farm, and are kept so busy all the year round that they scarcely ever get off the farm to see what other farmers are doing; much less do they get any opportunity to study up the methods of any one but those in their immediate neighborhood; and the best of farmers are apt to get into ruts. I have known many young men, brought up exclusively at home, who would have been very much benefited in every way by a change for a year or two, and they would have returned to the old home very much improved by the change.

But to be practical: How are we to manage to get this post-graduate course for our sons? The Agricultural College at Guelph is always pretty crowded, and then it costs money for the course of instruction received, and, besides, there is perhaps more of the theoretical and less of the practical part than many of the matter-of-fact fathers of the farmers' sons would desire. This is no fault of the management of the College, for there are such large numbers of the students that it is an utter impossibility to set them all at work, excepting, perhaps, for only a very short portion of the time.

My plan is something like this: Let the farmer's son hire out for a year with the most advanced agriculturist he can find who makes a financial success of his operations; at, say, from 50 to 100 miles from his own home, so that there would likely be a change in the methods pursued on the farm. Let him work faithfully for his employer and study his methods, and think out the reasons why this or that is done so; keep a diary of every day's work, making a memorandum of everything that he thought to be of special interest. If he does this faithfully and well, and makes the most of the opportunities at his disposal, I venture to say that our young man will return home with his range of mental vision very much broadened and enlarged, and his worth as a practical farmer very much enhanced. He should not remain less than one year on a farm, but perhaps it might be well to take a second year with another good farmer in another county, so that he could get a still wider experience.

Do I hear the father say, "How can I spare my boy? Hired help is very hard to get, and sometimes not very good when you do get it." Well, I believe that it will pay us to make a sacrifice in this direction. I speak as a father now, for being fully convinced of the benefits to be derived from the plan I am outlining, I am intending to arrange for such a post-graduate course for my own boy. But could we not manage to exchange boys, or, rather, young men, for a year? For instance, a farmer's son in the neighborhood of Guelph might hire out with a farmer in the County of Middlesex, and the son of the latter might hire out with the farmer near Guelph who was minus a boy. So that my plan would resolve itself into a change of boys for a year. Of course, each would be regularly hired at so much a year, and would be expected to give faithful service and good value for the money paid. Another question might arise: How are these farmers who wish to exchange sons for a year to be brought into communication with one