

Conservation

A monthly bulletin published by the
Commission of Conservation, Ottawa, Canada.

VOL. VII

DECEMBER, 1918

NO. 12

Homes Will Help to Retain Farm Labour

Reasons for Hired Help Will Attract a Better Class of Workmen to Farms

Homes are the great stabilizers of civilization. The more advanced industrial methods recognize the value of decent homes in keeping labour hard and thus preventing the heavy losses that result from constant shifting of man place to place. As a result of this recognition, many large industrial concerns provide neat and attractive houses, which they rent to their employees at reasonable rentals. Such cases are usually merely commercial propositions. Homes are provided because it is cheaper to do that than to suffer the losses due to the constant shifting of a more or less dissatisfied labour supply. Similarly, during the war, the Governments of Great Britain and the United States established model towns for the employees of munitions factories and the results in greater labour efficiency have surpassed all expectations.

Herein lies one of the remedies for the shortage of labour on farms. The farm-hand, whether married or single, whether employed permanently or temporarily, is, in most instances, dependent on the home surroundings of his former employer for the comforts and amenities of life. In cases where the farmer knows the difference between *existing* and *existing* this system may not be intolerable, but every efficient labourer desires a home where he can enjoy a reasonable measure of privacy and independence.

Farmers would do well to learn from the experience of industrial leaders and provide simple but attractive and comfortable homes, which could be leased to hired help at a small rental, or simply be used as a special inducement to encourage married men to seek on farms. Unless such advantages are provided, it is useless to complain of the scarcity and inefficiency of farm labour, for the best labourers are sure to seek for employment where they can have homes of their own and only the less competent and inefficient will find their way to the farms.—A. D.

British Columbia derives one-third of her annual revenue from her forests.

The Council of Social Service of the Church of England in Canada has endorsed the proposed formation of a national society to combat venereal diseases.

Nearly 79 per cent of Fire Losses Occur in Large Business Properties

Large Fires are the Important Ones, and Good Fire Prevention Strategy Should Concentrate on Factory and Business Risks—234 Fires out of 15,927 in Ten Months Cause 79 per cent of Losses

Fire waste in Canada is increasing by leaps and bounds. During the first ten months of 1918 the value of property destroyed by fire was 45 per cent greater than during the same period of 1917 and almost 70 per cent greater than in 1914. From January 1st to October 31st, 1918, no less than 15,927 fires were reported, the aggregate loss being \$28,443,200. On the basis of these figures it is reasonably certain that the total for the year 1918 will exceed \$34,000,000. For the whole twelve months of 1917, the losses were \$25,000,000. If, to the direct fire loss, there be added the expenditure upon insurance and municipal protection, fires will have cost the people of Canada the vast sum of \$65,000,000 or more than 19 per cent of the recent Victory Loan. Faced by economic problems of unparalleled gravity can we afford to be indifferent to this tremendous drain upon our national wealth? If not, what steps are being taken to remedy the condition?

In six of our provinces, fire marshal laws have been enacted and departments established to prevent fires. In two provinces, official leagues with

hundreds of members have been formed to spread abroad the gospel of fire prevention. The organized insurance interests including over 10,000 agents claim to be doing their utmost to improve conditions and in every city, town and village of importance throughout the Dominion, fire brigades are maintained to extinguish fire. The question naturally arises, what tangible results are being obtained for the \$30,000,000 annually spent upon the services of this organization?

All our attempts to prevent fire waste in Canada have been ineffective because we lack a concerted plan of decisive action. The problem of fighting fires is analogous to the problem of beating the Hun. Success lies in the mode of attack. At the present time, suspicious fires are being investigated, fire departments are subjected to a great deal of unmerited criticism for fires they cannot control, municipal authorities in general are pilloried for their laxity in enforcing local ordinances and the newspapers are being flooded with articles designed to enlighten the public upon the

(Continued on page 48)

Unwise to Speculate With Victory Bonds

Government Urges Bond Holders to Keep Their Bonds Until Maturity, if Possible

Unprecedented success has again attended Canada's Victory Loan. The number of individual subscribers is a credit to Canada, but the investment of savings in this way may lead to many heartburnings unless the people are fully warned of the dangers of speculation and of fake investments to which they will be exposed.

Many bonds were purchased from patriotic motives; many, however, were taken for the higher interest they offered, 5½ per cent, as compared with 3 per cent from the banks. This increased earning capacity of their money may make holders of bonds susceptible to the temptation of promoters and organizers. Advertisements are appearing offering to accept Victory Bonds in payment for real estate. In the United States many owners of Liberty Bonds have been robbed by being induced to exchange them for worthless securities supposed to carry a much higher rate of interest.

Monsieur Choquette, at the annual meeting of the Commission of Conservation in 1916, speaking on this subject of speculation, said: "Few days pass when farmers, young and old, are not asked to take part in financial concerns, in speculations which dangle untold riches before their longline eyes. The agents are clever and persevering. They have a thousand strings to their bow. Town lots, mining claims, natural gas and oil wells, patents, are all means of enticement, all the more alluring since the risk which accompanies them is hidden more or less honestly under the name of some master of finance, or

(Continued on page 46)

EDUCATION FOR OCCUPATIONS

Education for Occupations is the title of a very helpful address given by Dr. James W. Robertson, Chairman of the Lands Committee of the Commission of Conservation, before the Ontario Educational Association. It is particularly useful in this period of reconstruction. The Commission of Conservation has a few hundred copies and will be pleased to distribute them on request to teachers and others who are interested. Dr. Robertson was head of the commission which investigated the subject of technical education for the Dominion Government before the war.

TRY A CAN OF WHALE

"MADAM, I would suggest that you try a can of whale," said the grocer. "You will have heard that 100 per cent of the sockeye and red spring salmon and 75 per cent of the cohoes of the Pacific coast have been requisitioned by the British Government," he continued, "so that salmon is hard to get and even harder to pay for. But whale meat is just as—"

"Oh please don't try to tell me that it is just as good as salmon. I did so want to get some nice canned sockeye salmon. It is always so good."

"Well, I am sorry madam, but it is not to be had for a few days at least. I was going to say that canned whale meat resembles, and so people think it is just as good as tender, lean beefsteak. We are having quite a demand for it. Thank you, madam; I will send up two cans. It is only twenty cents a can."

And so this Boston grocer found another customer for Canadian canned whale. "Till recently, the canning of the flesh of this great, warm-blooded, ocean mammal was looked upon as a doubtful experiment. But, during the past season, it was sold by the carload in Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago and other cities of the United States.

"Perhaps Dame Fashion has had a hand in popularizing many such hitherto despised foods," mused the grocer.

But the threatening famine in Europe was probably a more important reason.—A. D.