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EDITORIAL

Courting Manufacturers of Engines and Motors.

There is no question of the need among Canadian farmers of mechanical traction power, whether generated by steam or gas. The problem of power on the farm takes a place with that of markets, railway transportation, weeds, farm help and other vexing questions. Manufacturers have made an attempt to supply a certain amount of the demand by adjusting their large threshing traction engines for the performance of plowing, but the light agricultural motor is not with us yet in commercial numbers; and this is a peculiar state of affairs. Other agricultural countries are being supplied with a various collection of motors of different types and sizes, built mostly by European manufacturers who have been able so far to compete successfully in this particular line with our American-made machines.

The adoption by the federal states of Australia of a protective tariff, which practically prohibits the sale of European manufactured machines in those states, directs attention to an opportunity whereby Canada may benefit. The protective tariff in Australia (25% on engines) means that a large number of European manufacturers must seek a market elsewhere. In England alone there are sixteen factories, each employing from three hundred to five thousand men, turning out traction engines and agricultural motors. The owners of these factories are now in search of markets. Representatives of three of them have visited our office this season, gathering information upon the country, and the prospects of making sales here. On enquiry they have found that the Canadian tariff on British engines and motors is fifteen per cent. as against twenty per cent. on the same articles from non-British shops, and twenty-five per cent. in Australia. The five per cent. preference upon the British machines is found to be sufficient to eliminate any disadvantage in the cost of transportation, and at least two British manufacturers are now preparing to place agricultural motors and traction engines upon the Canadian market. True it is there are those who say the British manufactured article is not adapted to our conditions, but the Britisher has always proved himself to be capable of adapting himself or his goods to the demands of a market, while at the same time maintaining the distinctive traits of workmanship and durability. The relative positions of the engines and motors in countries where the trade has been competed for by all nationalities forces the conviction that no one country can claim a long lead of supremacy in the work of manufacturing, and Western Canada is one of those countries that is ready for a greater diversity of motor power devices than she has at present.

The spying out of our land by a few manufacturers who have never before investigated the country as a possible market suggests that a great deal might be done to increase the number who might be induced to exploit Canadian markets for the country's good. Our government has done commendable work in supplying the country with laborers, our railway companies have transported immigrants at greatly reduced rates, and our provincial governments and municipal bodies have expended large sums in setting forth the advantages of particular districts, but very little has been done to increase the number of factories in the cities and towns. It would therefore appear a reasonable proposition for the city, towns and bodies interested in the development of the country to devote themselves to a considerable extent to the work of inducing capitalists and manufacturers to invest and locate in

Canada. In this connection the suggestion has also been made, and we think it a very good one, that the exhibition boards endeavor to secure competitions and tests of motors as a novelty attraction for the benefit and interest of the public.

Few devices have as bright a prospect of meeting a demand as have agricultural motors, weighing about four or five tons, and capable of taking the place of six to eight horses and we trust that our suggestions will be carefully considered by those who are in positions to further and foster the importation and manufacture of such machines in Canada.

A Tip to Politicians.

The country is entering upon a protracted federal election campaign in which party politicians are likely to discuss many things of little import, and, unless a mighty regeneration has recently taken place in the political conscience, leave undiscussed larger significant issues while the direct attack of each party will be pointed towards the persons, and insignificant things of the other. As a public we should discourage such methods of campaign, it is an affront to the intelligence of the rural population. We have principles we want to see elevated to larger importance and practical questions that should become the crux of political opinion. So far as the West is concerned the majority in their sane moments know what they want. The underlying principles which Westerners, and, in fact, all agricultural Canada, want to see dominating our government is the equality before the law of all interests and persons. Our tariff makes distinctions. It creates a protected class and a protesting class. It precipitates a chronic state of political warfare between the two classes, and the peace that can only be permanent is to be had through a leveling down of the protecting guards where they depend for their maintenance upon the producing classes. Frequently a solution of the inequalities that exist between the protected and unprotected interests is sought in the offering of protection to the latter, but such a scheme does not appeal to the agricultural classes. They repudiate any attempt to establish equality by the division of protective privileges, they rather would level inequalities down by the abolition of all favors. The attitude of the farming community upon the tariff and upon such public questions as bonuses, subsidies, etc., is one of reason. It is not an aggressive agitation for favors at the expense of other interests, but is rather a resisting of aggression and a protest against being taxed to pay bonuses to protected industries. Farmers do not shirk their share of the burden of the expense of government but want to see the burden laid equitably upon all shoulders. The justice of their position commends it.

A political creed such as the above will appeal to the agricultural population, but at present it is not the policy of either of the organized parties nor of the "Independents." It is the conviction of the political conscience of the farming community and should not be lost sight of either by aspirants to government nor by casters of ballots.

The Position of the Commission Man.

One helpful result of the hauling over of the methods of the Grain Exchange last year, is the greater knowledge the average man has of the facilities for marketing his grain. Many men learned during last year, for the first time, that there is a distinct difference between a commission man and a milling or an elevator company, as great a difference, in fact, in their aspirations on the market as between seller and buyer though both are members of the Grain Exchange. Milling and elevator companies, as a rule, make their profits in addition to their commissions by buying low and selling high, either as flour or as consignments of grain to other millers at

home or in Europe. Commission men, by the very nature of their work, are interested wholly in getting a high price for car loads of wheat that are entrusted to them to sell. The commission element is essentially the selling side and the milling, elevator and exporting firms the buying side of the market. All there is for a commission man in the wheat trade is the one cent a bushel charge for handling a consignment and it naturally follows that the higher price he may be able to sell a consignment for the better his client will be pleased and the more orders he will receive. The commission element, in fact, furnishes the real competition of the exchange, and the competition among men to secure consignments to sell and so prevent milling and elevator companies from getting both the commission and the grain is the most strenuous of all commercial competitions. True, commission men do not set the price of grain, in fact they have much less influence than have the elevator and milling interests who by their large operations may enhance or depress prices, but no one element can control prices, and the commission men follow the values as closely and sell at as high a point as human sagacity can direct.

Not everyone appreciates the dilemma a commission man may be in when selling consignments of wheat for his customers. The operators on a market can never tell what the high price of a day or week may be and are frequently blamed by farmers for not waiting to sell at the top price, but when it is remembered that the object of the commission man was honest, and that not even the elevator nor milling companies could secure a higher price for the seller there is no room for a suspicion of inattention to business or of double dealing.

The man who has a car of wheat to sell and who has no confidence in his local dealer or wishes to save local elevator charges, can make the shortest cut to the market by consigning his wheat to his own name, and authorizing a commission man to sell it within a certain time or upon a certain date. With the order in the hands of a commission man one can be certain that his wheat is being handled by a man who is just as anxious to get a high price as the producer is himself, his mind is relieved of the suspicion that his grain is in the hands of parties who can compel him to take their price or who are interested in having his wheat go through the regular channels upon the local market. The commission man who is honest, who is licensed and bonded, is worthy of a trial, but should not be pronounced "no good" if he does not secure the top price of the day. In the morning of the day on which he is ordered to sell, he has chances to take. Wheat may go up or down, no one knows which. At the close he may realize that he has sold too low in which case he is no worse than anyone else, and he may have sold at the top price of the day, in which case his services have been of the most valuable kind.

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The FARMER'S ADVOCATE is fortunate in having a staunch friend in the Peace River country in the person of Mr. F.S. Lawrence, of Ft. Vermillion, who has charge of the Dominion Government experimental farm there, and who is one of the oldest settlers in the district. Periodically he sends us a budget of news, always interesting, and from an agricultural standpoint the most authoritative news that the public receive.

In this issue we publish his latest letter which was fifty days from the date of writing to the time it arrived in our office. Exceptional interest centers in the Peace River at the present time, owing to the fact that it is practically the last great agricultural territory to be settled in America. The agricultural accomplishments in that country promise to be the most extensive, rapid and successful that have been witnessed on the continent.