

Farmer's Advocate

and Home Journal

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875

January 6, 1909

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

Vol. XLV. No. 550

EDITORIAL

As to Our Mortgages

Annual reports of mortgage, trust and loan companies indicate that the amount of money borrowed by farmers and secured by mortgages is very much on the increase. Taking the figures of one company as an example, the amount placed in mortgages in the past six years increased by nearly 50 per cent. These figures are not alarming, for they must be considered in conjunction with the increase in settlement, improvements and yields of our principal crops. In 1902 the total yield of wheat for Western Canada was about sixty-eight million bushels and 1902 was the year of the great bumper crop. The 1908 crop is nearly 40 per cent larger. In Manitoba the estimated value of new buildings on the farms alone is about 30 per cent over the value of those erected in 1907. The total population of the western provinces in 1908 is estimated at about 1,000,000 as compared with 645,517 at the end of 1901. During the same six years, land values made a distinct advance, and a large amount of land that did not figure as at all productive has been brought under cultivation, so that it may be said that the value of visible and productive land has increased over 50 per cent. The country is thus making progress and it is only to be expected that mortgages would have increased. There is, however, one thing about mortgages that should not be lost sight of. It is no discredit to a man to be able to get one, and the money so secured should be invested so that it will return more in convenience, comfort, and actual dividends than the cost of its interest. Besides this, just as soon as a mortgage is placed there should be a serious, determined effort to discharge it. Mortgages should never have permanent homes.

The Profit in a Crop

According to the statistics of the United States crop reporting bureau, there is as much profit in growing one crop which yields twenty bushels to the acre as in growing two which turn out sixteen bushels. The difference between the value of sixteen and twenty represents the greater part of the profit in working an acre, the greater part of the value of a sixteen bushel crop being taken up in defraying the cost of cultivating, harvesting, and paying other expenses and charges. Here is where the successful farmer differs from the less successful, he works not for a bare crop, but for a surplus in his crop over the cost of production and the larger that surplus is the more successful a farmer he is. The agencies he uses to attain his end are the best cultivation he is capable

of giving, the maintaining of his land in the highest possible state of fertility, the use of the best possible seed he can secure and careful attention to details, with the object of avoiding every possible waste of time, soil, crop, and loss in selling.

It is not enough for a man to work his land according to the accepted methods. He must know his land as he knows the disposition of his horses. Some spots in a field will need long, strawy manure, others will need short, well-rotted manure, others will be better with no manure at all, while perhaps, there are whole quarters that may be brought up to virgin fertility by the growing of a crop of grass. Some lands, and their extent is constantly on the increase, will always continue to give decreasing yields until the hard crust at the furrow bottom is broken up and the loose crop-worn soil on top is turned down to make room for fresh fertility-charged soil. The longer most lands are cropped, the more shallow they become, leaving less soil to retain moisture and supply roots of plants with a feeding ground. As farmers, we are too prone to extend our fields on the surface while neglecting to extend them in a vertical direction.

But one of the most commonly neglected aids to larger crops is good seed. The remarkable fertility of our new lands often obscures the importance of strong seed by producing as large a crop from poor seed as from good, but this can only be the case when the season is favorable and the soil rich. If we could always be sure of these two conditions, then we could afford to ignore the necessity of good seed, but the weather is altogether beyond our control so that it is incumbent that every device and circumstance that lends itself to the production of larger crops be employed.

As to what constitutes first quality of seed there are differences of opinions and this is where the necessity of attending a seed fair comes in. Often the very best seed a certain farm produces, is far inferior to the best that is grown elsewhere, but this difference may not be noticed until samples from each are brought into competition. A few years ago British farmers became interested in the improvement of their seeds just as they had devoted themselves to the improvement of their live-stock with the result that today, the grain crops of that country are giving increases in their average yields of fifteen per cent and upwards. The corn growers of the United States have made similar improvement, and the opportunity is now open to Canadian grain growers to add millions of dollars to the annual value of their crops by the use of only the best seed they can produce or buy. The seed fair is a good starting point for such work, and every grain grower will benefit by attending such fairs and so make a start.

The Country's Need

In this issue we begin the publication of a series of articles that should be studied by every farmer, his wife, sons, daughters and hired men. This series is written by men who have observed the conditions surrounding farm life and who have been in close contact with these conditions, so close in fact that the conclusions published have been reached as a result of the influence of these conditions upon their minds. The series is written in response to enquiries by the editor as to what the farming community should have before it as an ideal. For convenience the subject was divided under three heads: 1st, what policy should be followed in farming legislation? 2nd, what aims and objects should characterize farmer's organizations? 3rd, what should be the individual farmer's aim?

Our object in getting expressions of opinions from men in different parts of the country is to assist in developing more unanimity of opinion among farmers as a class. Our population is made up of people having many different ideals. People have come to us with theories which they have nursed in foreign countries, others are carried away by the possibilities and scope afforded them in a new country, others are born radicals and constantly urge for a change of conditions. So many theories are advanced and clash that it is difficult to register an opinion that may be said to be endorsed by the majority of farmers.

It is no doubt impossible to so mold public opinion that it will be unanimous upon the various questions that confront the farming community, but there is a need for fixed ideals, for definite aims, so that when a proposal is made, there will be some standard by which to judge of its soundness and value. Farmers are being called upon constantly to decide certain separate proposals of action when they are not clear as to what the final whole is intended to be. There is many a proposal which upon superficial examination appears to be in the interests of the farming community, or at least, not to be antagonistic, but which, upon careful examination, or by experiment, will be found decidedly injurious.

Take for instance the tariff; how plausible that argument is; that by protecting the manufacturer, large home markets will be built up where the farmer can sell his produce and hence be in a better position than if he had to sell his grain, vegetables, live-stock, fruit, etc., on a foreign market. This argument has been so forcibly put that farmers' organizations have actually endorsed a proposal for higher protection to manufactured goods, while all the time the price of their own products at home was determined by the price that could be got for them in foreign markets after paying a big bill for freight.