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AND

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THE FARMER'S NATIONAL WEEKLY

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EDITORIAL

The Surety of Possession

The report of the engineers in charge of location surveys in connection with the proposed railway to Hudson's Bay, was presented to the government last week. A few days earlier the report of the Canadian Commissioners to the International Conference at Washington, on the conservation of the natural resources of North America, was laid before Parliament. In one report the extent and value of the natural resources, forests, fisheries, agricultural land, mineral wealth and waterways, of a country we are proposing to build a railway through, is outlined. In the other, serious suggestions are offered as to the most efficient means of conserving for ourselves and future generations, what remains of the wealth of forests, fisheries, mines, agricultural lands and waterways, to which and through which, we long ago located lines of railway, or in other ways, permitted and aided men, to possess themselves of and ruthlessly exploit.

It is said that there are millions of acres of valuable timber land, in the valley of the Nelson, down which it is now proposed the Hudson's Bay railway shall run; that its tributaries north and south, drain great areas of forest and agricultural land; that the country all through, is dotted with lakes and streaked with streams of inestimable possibilities, as regards fisheries and water power; that there are large peat deposits and indications of mineral wealth, in brief an area of country, lying beyond the beaten ways of civilization, that is blessed by nature, in as rich a measure as any portion of our domain, which we have up to the present opened and exploited.

Railway building in this country, in the past, has been carried on for the most part, by the public sacrificing its rights in, and possession of, a large portion of the territory through which the lines passed, afterwards buying it

back at whatever price the railways were minded in charge. The Hudson's Bay line, it is true, is to be built by the government assumedly without land grant, subsidy or bonus to anybody, but despite that, there are a good many dark and devious ways, by which possession of pretty nearly everything that's worth owning in that country, may be transferred from the public to favored individuals or corporations. That's the part of this business that needs most careful watching.

Of the countries on this continent, taking part in the International conservation of resources conference, ours can profit most by what the past has taught. With the others, the horse had got completely away before anybody thought of locking the stable door. He has to be caught and brought back. Some desperate attempts have been made to get ours, but we have hand-hold yet on the halter shank, and if we can hang on, we may get him back again. Chronic insomnolence is the price of the public's surety of possession of the public wealth. That and a determination to hang on to it.

Possibilities in Sheep Husbandry

As to why sheep attract less attention in this country than they did formerly, there are different opinions. Mr. J. B. Spencer, in his recent bulletin, attributes the decline in this branch of stock husbandry, partly to the changed conditions surrounding agriculture, in these days, as compared with the conditions prevailing when farming was carried on in a more primitive way, and partly to the systematizing of agriculture, the development of other lines of animal husbandry, the increase in the numbers of horses, hogs, beef and dairy cattle, and the encouragement which our governments have given these lines, in various ways, in the past fifteen or twenty years.

In the West the decline in sheep raising, has been less noticeable than in the East. Unfortunately, figures are not available to show exactly what conditions are, so far as the total number in the Western provinces is concerned, and the increase or decrease in those numbers during the past few years. Breeders, however, report that lately the demand for breeding stock has increased, a fairly certain indication that interest in sheep raising is starting afresh. It may be laid down as a general proposition that sheep raising will increase, at very nearly the same rate as mixed farming does in taking the place of grain growing in the agriculture of our prairie provinces. We do not look for any marked development in the sheep ranching business, but we do expect sheep to fill an important place as a live stock branch of mixed farming.

The West does not produce at the present time nearly as large a quantity of mutton as it consumes. The wholesale meat houses in

Winnipeg, sell imported mutton in every town between that city and the Rocky Mountains, and in British Columbia, also, though Australian and New Zealand frozen mutton enters the British Columbia trade. Sheep and lambs of first class quality are rarely seen in the Winnipeg live stock market. As a matter of fact, it is several months now since any were received at all. Prices are never high, for the abattoir people follow the rule of paying for live stock, the very lowest price for which they can get it, and sheep (however scarce they may be), are bought very much in the same style, but the price though as a general thing, is about as high as sheep of similar quality in other centers. We have often been led to think, that if our sheep men would fatten their lambs, and place them on the market at the proper season, keeping sheep would be a more remunerative occupation than it is sometimes under the general selling system followed.

Winnipeg is about the worst live stock market of its size and pretensions on this continent. The price of stock seems to be ruled by nothing but the fancy of the buyer, and he fancies low prices as a general rule. At the same time it is because the bulk of the stuff offering is low class, that competition to possess is not keen. The prices quoted for sheep in Winnipeg, at the present time, is the same as the top price paid this week in Chicago, and is an even dollar higher than prices offering in Toronto for first quality ewes. Outside of draft horse-breeding, sheep offer as good money making chances as any branch of live stock, more so as we consider the comparative cheapness with which they may be produced, and their value in holding weeds in check, and maintaining the fertility of the soil.

Training Our Public School Teachers

The chief difficulty in the teaching of agriculture in the public schools is that the average public school teacher has no knowledge whatever, or, at best, the most superficial understanding of the subject she or he is expected to offer instruction in. To overcome this difficulty the Department of Education for Manitoba, will require teachers training in the normal colleges of the province to spend, at the conclusion of the normal term, from a month to six weeks, at the Provincial Agricultural College, where a special course of instruction will be given in agriculture and its branches, and the sciences pertaining thereto. The first-class in this course will be formed at the Agricultural College next month, and, we infer, from the remarks of the Minister of Education, at the convention of agricultural societies, will be continued, if results are satisfactory.

Agriculture can never be taught by the cut and dried methods formerly attempted in our public schools. An instructor needs to be in

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