

The Canadian Egg Trade*

W. A. Brown, Live Stock Dept., Ottawa, Ont.

PROBABLY the most astonishing fact in connection with the Canadian poultry industry is that an agricultural country such as ours is an importer of poultry products. In 1912 Canadian consumers used 13 million dozen more eggs than Canadian hens produced.

The total per capita consumption of eggs in the Dominion has in 20 years increased from 11.8 dozen to 17.39 dozen. When we consider the rapid increase in population that has taken place in that time, we realize why the increase in egg production in that same time from 64 million dozen per annum to 123 million dozen has not been able to keep pace with the increased consumption. The accompanying increase in the number of poultry has been from 12 millions to 25 millions.

CANADA IMPORTER OF EGGS

Prince Edward Island is the only province in the Dominion that exports any appreciable quantity of eggs. All the other provinces import more or less heavily. British Columbia comes first with over five million dozen. Next in order come Manitoba, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, Saskatchewan, and the Maritime Provinces.

A very pertinent question at this time might be, Why the present shortage of eggs? In former years Canada has been able in times of shortage

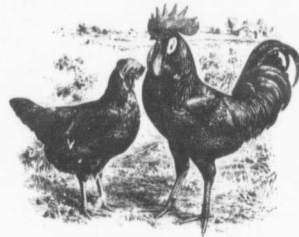
Some dealers place the last percentage at 10 to 12.

These poor eggs are removed in candling. In the city of Toronto, 60 per cent. of the eggs are candled before they reach the consumer. It is a mistake to think that candling will prevent further deterioration. Eggs must be kept under proper conditions after they have been candled.

PEOPLE MUST LEARN TO JUDGE

It is important that the people learn to judge eggs and thus protect themselves. In Montreal, for example, of 500 complaints registered with the food inspection department, none were for eggs. The public, too, have a poor idea of the value of cold storage. Cold storage has been of incalculable value to the egg trade. Without it we would have an abundance of cheap eggs in summer and none at all in November.

There is a great need for an official standard. Once we had proper grading eggs would be labelled in accordance with the standard and the public would become acquainted with the grades. The term fresh, for instance, as applied in the



Fowl of a Special Purpose Type

Black Minorca are egg producers. They make good table fowl, but are not so desirable for this purpose as the American breeds—Rocks, Wyandottes, and so forth. They are said to be especially adapted to a humid climate.

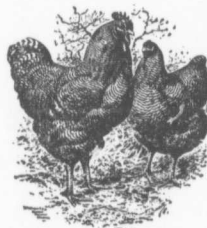
trade to-day, is to the consumer a delusion and a snare.

The first move must come from the people. In this respect it is gratifying to note that there are signs of an awakening. The Live Stock Branch of the Department of Agriculture at Ottawa is conducting investigations that will make for the improvement of present conditions.

One Hundred Hens a Paying Recreation

AT a time when the cost of living is soaring like an aeroplane, it may be opportune to suggest a means of making hours of recreation not only amusing, and healthful, but even profitable. Such a triple benefit, but especially the latter, is derived from a flock of hens, breeding them white as snow, and developing their best qualities by selection, are pleasant and educative tasks. To feed the fowl, to chase them from the flower bed or off a cynical neighbor's fence and, above all, to see nature make them grow and mature, is to cultivate outdoor health and vigor. These effects are enhanced by the accompanying satisfaction of obtaining them at no loss, but with a substantial revenue.

P. J. Kelly, Peterboro Co., Ont.



The Most Popular of All

Barred Plymouth Rocks are more widely kept on farms in the United States and Canada than any other breed. When a breed is so popular there must be a very good reason.

That profit can be derived from a flock of 100 hens goes without reasonable contradiction; but the amount varies according to the business acumen of the owner. In a carefully conducted test at the O. A. College, extending over three years, the cost of feeding 100 hens was found to be \$127.20 a year. During this time the birds laid 1,169 dozens of eggs. With the average price of new-laid about 30 cents a dozen, we have 100 hens producing \$348 a year, of which \$220.80 is profit. This is a considerable padding for any man's purse.

In another experiment conducted with 100 hens on a private farm near Ottawa, a total profit of \$300 accrued to the owner in one year. Just sensible care was given to the flock, nor were any eggs sold but for market prices. Such examples demonstrate the fact that hens are profitable.

During the progress of this latter experiment, to form my own opinion, I tested 30 Wyandottes from January 1, 1912, to May 1 of the same year. In this unfavorable period of four months I was

returned a profit of \$22. This year I am submitting 75 hens to a similar trial, and already they are doing well. The first week of January they laid 152 eggs; in the second, 178; in the third, 172—a total of 502 eggs. In the local market these brought \$15.07. As the cost of feeding was \$6.05, my profit was \$9.02, or \$3 a week. These simple personal trials, together with the successes of my neighbors, lead me to think that a flock of 100 hens should return a gain of \$300 a year.

Of course, a bunch of way-side foragers, as bizarre in shape as Parisian hats, will not produce such revenue.

Perched in trees, under the gentle shelter of the starlight, they will become more poetical than plump. Left to hunt their own constructing material, they will return to you proportionately as many eggs as the Israelites returned bricks to Pharaoh. Good fowl must be properly fed and sheltered if we expect them to be 100 factories working overtime to make eggs and money.

Pure bred fowl of any good, heavy variety are efficient producers of profit. They should be birds with breeding back of them. They cost a little, but the first cost is the greatest. Remember, too, the male as head of the flock is, at least, one-half of it, and should be an energetic, aristocratic lad. Parsimony in procuring a good cock is bad economy. The heavy breeds generally have proved to be winter layers, and in the spring, when broilers are selling at 50 cents a pound, the progeny of such fowl grow rapidly. When you kill a Wyandotte or Rock you have something worth setting before a fastidious guest. Large hens, laying when eggs are dearest and growing quickly into heavy and succulent flesh, are consequently producers of profit.

Such fowl require in a house conditions suitable for work and health. Fresh air, coming in



The Home of a Poultry Specialist

Many British Columbia poultrymen depend on poultry alone for an income. The home of one of these specialists, S. G. Hanson, Nanaimo Dist., B.C., may be here seen. The greater part of the poultry wealth of Canada, however, is produced by general farmers, not specialists.

to draw upon the United States, which has usually had a surplus for export. This year that surplus has not been available. The Ontario market, in particular, is regulated by Chicago conditions. The number of eggs in storage there is this season far below normal. Last January there was a heavy egg crop, followed by low spring production. The result was that fewer eggs went into storage. The United States, instead of exporting a large surplus, is this winter importing.

Quality is the dominant note in the egg trade to-day. To it we must first direct our attention; then correlate quality to price. A great drawback has been, and still is, that the consumers don't know much about the grading of eggs. Naturally enough it is difficult to detect poor quality in eggs when judging by outward appearances only. Candling overcomes this difficulty. With a little practice anyone can learn to tell good from bad eggs.

Canadian eggs as marketed are of a poor quality. In summer, only 33 per cent. will grade select, 40 per cent. stale, 17 per cent. very stale, five per cent. broken, and five per cent. bad.

*Summary of an address delivered at the Guelph Winter Fair