

IMPROVING BUTTER PRICES

The season of 1916 will likely see the largest output of butter Western Canada has ever yet marketed. C. P. Marker, dairy commissioner for Alberta, estimates that the make in that province will run 9,000,000 pounds this year as against 7,400,000 pounds last year, which was a very favorable season. Saskatchewan is preparing for a big make, as is Manitoba. In all three distinct steps have been made to further improve the quality of the creamery product and thereby extend and consolidate the market. It is said 90 per cent. of the cream reaching Alberta creameries this year will be pasteurized, which treatment adds greatly to the keeping quality of the butter and seems essential for long shipments. Manitoba has put into force regulations so stringent as to make the profitable operation of cream gathering stations difficult. Such a system of cream gathering in any case is not only expensive to operate, but cannot produce the highest prices to the farmer. The recent conference of dairy commissioners held in Regina will go far to unifying the Western creamery output, and paving the way for export trade.

But these are the larger aspects of the development of quality products. The supplying of the proper kind of cream rests with the farmer. Wherever he can ship to a creamery that pays by grade he gets paid in exact proportion to the care with which he handles his cream. Where cream is not graded or where dairy butter must be made the problem is not so easy. Sometimes individual farmers can find a steady customer in the local town by putting good butter in carefully prepared pound prints. But the greater part of dairy butter at present goes thru the country store. Here discrimination regarding quality is altogether insufficient. The old method of "trading" puts far too small a premium on quality products. Many farmers by carefully packing

butter in prints, in boxes or even in rolls and shipping to private customers or reliable commission houses could secure a greater return. Winnipeg will absorb very much larger amounts of this than at present reaching the market and can handle both good and poor quality butter, very much better than the country store. The difference between No. 1 and No. 2 dairy butter is about seven cents in Winnipeg, which speaks loud enough about the necessity of quality. One thing is certain, too great care cannot be taken of the cream, and the utmost cleanliness, careful cooling and frequent shipping will put a decided premium on butter or cream handled in this way.

TAXING UNUSED LAND

It is surprising what revenue we can raise without taxing production when we attack the problem from the right angle. In October, 1914, Alberta enacted a Wild Lands Tax of one per cent. on the assessed value of all taxable wild land in the province. Of course this left enormous areas still untaxable, including Crown lands, C.P.R. lands, Hudson's Bay lands, Indian reservations, unpatented homestead lands, lands under Dominion grazing leases and generous exemptions on owners' lands. Yet this small tax was levied on 8,110,955 acres assessed at \$69,973,934 and contributed in 1915 to the treasury of Alberta \$699,824.

In 1913 Saskatchewan grappled with this same problem of making the holder of un-producing land pay a part of the administration of those lands and make some slight return for the added value created by the people living on and working the surrounding land. A "Surtax" of \$10.00 per quarter section was levied on owners of unused land and this swelled the revenues of the rural municipalities of Saskatchewan in 1914 by approximately \$755,000. The amount raised in 1915, tho all

the returns are not in, will, it is expected, slightly exceed that in 1914. In Alberta the money derived from the Wild Lands Tax is expended by the Provincial Government itself, but in Saskatchewan no portion of the revenue derived from the surtax is received by the government, but all is levied and collected by the municipality and forms part of the general revenue of the municipality which of course is spent under direction of the Municipal Council.

The people on whom these taxes are levied are largely non-producers living elsewhere and interested in the community where their holdings are located only in so far as the price of their land is enhanced. Such enhanced value must come thru the toil of the population of the surrounding land who are very often seriously handicapped by such large vacant holdings between them and their neighbors or between them and the nearest railroad station. Under the Alberta and Saskatchewan taxes the man who heretofore has been getting something for nothing will return a small proportion at least of these socially created values to the improvement of the community. Since such a small tax has contributed almost three quarters of a million dollars in each province to the public revenues, the tax could well be increased and another similar sum squeezed from those anxious to profit by the labor of others. We might even raise a healthy addition to our war contributions and make the absent holders pay a little of the cost of protecting this land they love so much. In Manitoba there is a large amount of idle land that is being held for speculative purposes. The government could easily find \$500,000 by taxing this idle land and by so doing impose no extra tax on producers.

The first interest of politicians is re-election; the first interest of statesmen is educational and constructive legislation for their country.

THE MASSACRE OF VERDUN



NARRATOR: "We have made terrible sacrifices to get here and have accomplished nothing."
CROWN PRINCE: "Why, Father, if we were only a little bit higher we could see Paris."
The Crown Prince is in charge of the great attack on Verdun.