

THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, JUNE 19, 1920

## SEES NO DANGER OF BEEF FAMINE

Dr. Mohler Deprecates Alarmist Reports

U. S. Federal Bureau Chief Says 1,200-Pound Steer Can Be Raised in One Year.

Washington, June 19.—"Though meat is not so plentiful in this country as it used to be, I can see no menace of the beef famine that has been predicted so frequently within the last few weeks," said Dr. John R. Mohler, Chief of the Bureau of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture, when he was asked for a statement of his views on the food problem. Dr. Mohler deprecates the alarmist stories that have appeared from time to time concerning the menacing shortage of meat products in the United States, and believes that they are grossly exaggerated.

Among the current exaggerations he cited the statement that it will require seven years to replace the 600,000 head of cattle lost to the herds during the past year, or, in other words, that the beef supply cannot regain its 1919 status until 1926. It is also reported that dairy cows have been going to the shambles in large numbers, that our exports of beef fell off 50 per cent in the last year, that the country will soon have to depend on other nations for its meat supply, and that leather may become so scarce that the wooden shoe of the European peasant will find a place in the United States.

Even bankers have taken up the cry of beef famine and are urging their clientele to invest their savings in cattle loans in order to stimulate production. Must Keep up Production.

"When these various stories are subjected to careful scrutiny," said Dr. Mohler, "they are found to rest upon a very frail foundation. We all know that meat is scarce and prices are high. Most of us, indeed, have almost forgotten the taste of sirloin steak. At present, however, I do not feel that a real meat famine threatens the country, but if we are to continue to supply our own needs it is important that our beef production should be kept up and increased to meet the demands of a growing population."

Dr. Mohler took up these stories one by one and proceeded to explode them. He showed that instead of requiring seven years to produce a beef animal, the stockmen of the West, with improved breeding and feeding methods, can now raise a 1,200-pound steer for the market in twelve months. The average time required to produce a marketable beef animal has been reduced nearly one-half within the last two decades. This means, he said, that a given number of cattle offers a potential meat supply of nearly double the former yield. A falling off in numbers therefore, does not necessarily mean fewer pounds of beef.

It may be true that some dairy cows have been slaughtered, as reported, he said, but the statistics compiled by the Department of Agriculture show that within the last year there has been a distinct gain in the numbers of this particular type of animal. It is also true that there was a considerable slump in the exports of beef from this country in 1919 as compared with 1918, but he pointed out that the exports of beef from 1918 to 1919 were abnormally large on account of the war demand. While the exports of beef fell from 700,000,000 pounds in 1918 to 300,000,000 in 1919, the shipments in the latter year were still eight times as great as those in 1913.

There was a steady increase in the



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number of beef cattle in the United States from 1913 to 1918 when the peak of production for the past decade was attained. In this five-year period the number grew from 85,555,000 to 45,080,000, an increase of 26 per cent. During the past year, however, there was an absolute decline of 400,000 head, or slightly more than 1 per cent. According to Dr. Mohler, such a small decrease does not justify sounding the alarm of an approaching meat famine, especially when it is noted that the number of cattle at the beginning of the current year was about 24 per cent greater than in 1913. He believes that some decrease after the war was to be expected.

Discussing the statement that the United States will soon have to look

elsewhere for its meat supply, Dr. Mohler called attention to the fact that during the past ten years, with the exception of 1914, exports of beef from this country have exceeded its imports. "We have not yet reached the point where we have to depend on imported meats," he said, "and if the American people learn to overcome their prejudice against mutton they can satisfy their appetite for meat for a long time to come without drawing upon the resources of other countries."

There is a strange dislike for lamb and mutton in the rural districts of this country, said Dr. Mohler. Only in the Eastern States, and particularly in the metropolitan areas is there a good demand for this article of food. This condition is ascribed to habit or prejudice, which, it is believed, may be overcome by a campaign for education. The output of pork can be greatly increased also, and this may be expected when conditions forport including exchange rates, become more favorable. The number of hogs decreased about 5,000,000 in the last year, following the slump in their prices in the summer of 1919.

Few Dairy Cows Reported.

As evidence of the popular misunderstanding of the meat problem, Dr. Mohler referred to the outcry which was raised last year when it was announced that several thousand head of dairy cattle were to be exported to France. Fear was expressed that the domestic stocks were being depleted for the benefit of foreign countries. The total number shipped, said Dr. Mohler, was only 11,000 and constituted an infinitesimal portion of the American herds.

"There has been a marked improvement in the quality of cattle produced during the past ten years," Dr. Mohler added, in summing up the live stock situation. "Still greater improvement can be made by the more careful selection of breeding stock, both male and female. The better sires movement, now under way, encouraging the use of high class sires on our farms and ranges, will increase the production of beef. By adopting improved methods of breeding a marketable beef animal can be produced in two years, instead of three of four years, which means greater production even though the total number of animals in the country remains essentially the same. Other factors that will increase our beef supply are better methods of wintering our breeding and feeding stocks and the utilization of all suitable farm roughage."

Rotary Clubs Encourage Singing.

Many Rotary Clubs are incorporating singing as a fixed and vital part of their weekly luncheons. Speaking with one of the leading officers in a club that has made much of the musical side of its meetings, he thus explained to the Toronto Globe, their stand on music:

"Ever think of the value that comes to Rotary and radiates from Rotary through the singing that enters so largely into the unity and enthusiasm of its members at their meetings?" he said.

"The happiest, most generous, most responsive people on earth are the singing people; therefore, the why of Rotary—why it enthralls, energizes and accomplishes—imagine a club meeting without singing; can you conjure in your imagination anything more dreary? Eliminate the song feature of Rotary and the gloom would be so thick you could cut it with a plate. Abandon song enthusiasm and club guests would not take away with them any of the large impressions that they have of the spirit of Rotary, of its power for accomplishing things and its power for service."

"Have you noticed the public influence that the spirit of the song service in Rotary is having in the community? Haven't you noticed in other organizations, business and social, how singing is more and more featured in gathering after the example from Rotary?"

"But it is among the Rotarians where the great value of the song spirit in Rotary comes home to each of us individually. Two hundred members of our club are singing at their dinner each week, who for years had forgotten to sing, or who, laboring under the impression that they could not sing, have found out differently. There may be lacking something of the technical or cultural, but the songs of the club are the best music in the world, for they come in a care-forgotten spirit of relaxation and associated fellowship that stay with us all through the days that follow. When in the busy afternoon or in the morning after I hear in the corridors of our office building someone

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humming or whistling one of the popular songs I feel the touch of fellowship, and feel like joining in the refrain. Other songs come to mind, and with them the recollection of the enthusiasm, the spirit of service, the desire for larger things, that accompanied them at the Rotary meeting.

"Of all that is fine in Rotary, nothing is finer than the spirit of song that is the happy accompaniment along the long, long trail of service that the membership of this, the most unique of clubs, gives so generously and unstinted."

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