

by the Federal and Provincial Governments with a view to improve the quality of market eggs, but such work has been largely ineffective because of the fact that in the prevailing system of marketing no premium has been placed upon quality.

"It has been pointed out repeatedly that the 'case-count' system of buying eggs has been largely the cause of the general unsatisfactory condition of the trade.

"For many years eggs have been purchased by number without regard to quality. This has been decidedly unfair to the farmers and other producers who have taken pains to market good, clean, fresh eggs, and through placing no premium on good eggs the system referred to has really become an incentive to the continuance of careless and dilatory methods. It has made possible the disposal of eggs in all stages of decomposition, and has encouraged farmers and local buyers to hold eggs at certain seasons of the year when they have no satisfactory places for storing them.

"This whole subject has been thoroughly discussed at recent meetings of produce dealers of the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec. Officials from both the Federal and Ontario Departments of Agriculture were present at these meetings, and endeavoured strongly to present the imperative need of a radical change in the system of handling and marketing eggs.

"The following is a brief summary of what transpired at these meetings:—

"The Government officials pointed out that while the enormous loss and shrinkage apparent in the trade and the uncertain quality of eggs as received by the consumer was partly due to carelessness and negligence on the part of the farmer, yet he was not entirely to blame. The unsatisfactory condition of the trade is the fault of the system, rather than of those engaged in it. The evil lies in the fact that inferior eggs command as high a price as new-laid eggs, and absolutely rotten eggs are bought and sold in the same dozen as good eggs. It was emphasized that so soon as the dealers saw their way clear to unite in discriminating against an inferior product and in allowing a liberal premium for a superior product, the quality of market eggs would improve and bad eggs would be eliminated from the trade.

"Two methods of changing the system have been worked out in a number of places. The first and the most generally adopted is known as 'loss-off' buying, which consists of making deductions from the sum total of receipts for eggs which are bad and unfit for food. The second, which involves the grading of eggs and is referred to as 'quality payment,' consists of paying for each separate grade according to its real value. In the latter system there is constantly held out to farmers some effective inducement to produce and market eggs of the highest quality.

"'Quality payment' is certainly to be preferred to 'loss-off' buying, for the reason that it places a premium on the best quality of eggs. A premium paid to the farmer for eggs that would grade new-laid as contrasted with those that fall into lower grades would be of the utmost value in stimulating production and improving the quality of eggs as they leave the farm. It was repeatedly emphasized that there would be little inducement for the farmer to pay any particular attention to the question of quality in eggs until the dealers were ready to make a difference between the prices paid for good and bad eggs.

"The results of a recent experiment conducted by the Poultry Department of the Ontario Agricultural College were quoted to show that it would pay dealers to pay a premium for high-grade eggs. Certain cases of eggs of the very highest quality were put in storage and held in comparison with other cases of the best eggs secured from ordinary country receipts. The difference in quality at the expiration of the cold-storage period was very marked, so much so that it would at least have been more profitable to purchase the best grade of eggs used at 28 cents per dozen rather than average country receipts at 25 cents.

"It is evident, therefore, that the dealers who claim to be so desirous of securing quality eggs have in their own hands the most effective remedy for a large part of the trouble.