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Threshermen Fix Prices

A threshermen's association has been formed in Oxford County. The objects of this organization, as stated by a thresherman of that district, are: To unite the threshermen of the county for mutual benefit, and to put the business on a better paying basis. The association met a few days ago and decided upon a rate of \$12.00 per day or \$1.25 per hour for threshing. The price per bushel has not been fixed yet. There are sixty-three threshermen in the county, and fifty out of this number have joined the association, and it is claimed the remainder have raised their prices to meet the association prices. So it would seem that the farmers of Oxford County will have to pay higher prices the coming season to get their threshing done than formerly.

For some time threshermen in many parts of the country have been complaining of not making enough out of the business to pay their way and have a decent living. It is true the blame for it lies wholly with those engaged in the business. Of late years the number of threshing outfits in the country has greatly increased, and in many sections threshermen have been almost tumbling over each other in order to get business. To an outsider this would be an indication that the business was a profitable one or was believed to be such by many who were induced to invest capital in threshing outfits. But it would seem as if the business had been greatly overdone and now those engaged in it are endeavoring to put it on a more profitable basis.

Farmers, no doubt, will take a different view of the situation from what the threshermen take. We do not think that many of them will object to paying a fair rate for good work done. The rate per day fixed by the Oxford association seems somewhat indefinite. For a full day's work early in the season the charge seems reasonable. But how about later in the season, when the day's work must necessarily be from one to two hours shorter? We suppose the rate per hour will be used then in reckoning up a day's work. There certainly should be a considerable difference made in the charge for a day's work in the latter part of August and September and that for a day's work in November. The fairest way would appear to be to thresh by the bushel, and then the farmer would be paying for the actual work done.

But the difficulties in connection with the threshing business are not

all upon the side of the thresherman. The farmer sometimes has to put up with a great deal of unnecessary inconvenience and annoyance in connection therewith. The system of going about from farm to farm threshing is one of the most fruitful sources for the dissemination of weeds that we have. We have known cases where a careless thresherman would leave a dirty farm, where noxious weeds such as wild oats, etc. were abundant, and move his outfit to a neighboring farm or one several miles away, without taking the trouble to clean the separator or any part of the outfit. Many a farmer to-day can point to this source for many of the weeds now prevalent on his farm. Every farmer should insist upon a threshing outfit being thoroughly cleaned before he allows it on his farm or to enter his barn. Then there are little delays in getting started or caused by some part of the machinery going wrong, that he should not have to pay for when hiring by the day. The work also should be well done. The grain carried to the granary should be reasonably clean and there should be as little of it as possible elevated to the straw mow. These are some of the things the farmer should look to at threshing time. And if the work is well and faithfully done he should not object to paying a fair price for it. But when the work is done in a slovenly manner and both time and grain wasted threshermen should not grumble if he objects to the higher price. There should be no objection on the part of farmers to an organization like the above providing it will ensure better work being done for them by threshmen. If rates are raised to a uniform price, there should be more uniform work done. There are threshers and threshers, and while many are well worth the rate the association has fixed there are others who would be dear at half the price. An effective organization should seek to remedy this by bringing all the work done by its members up to a uniform standard. Unless there is something done in this direction we are afraid farmers may have good ground for believing that such associations are formed purely and simply to raise prices.

Licensing Cheese and Butter Factories.

This question was discussed at the Ottawa Cheese Board a week ago. It will be remembered that at the Dairy Conference at Ottawa last April, a system of licensing factories so that only factories

with proper sanitary equipment would be allowed to make cheese or butter, and that each one should have the services of an instructor was recommended. The Ottawa Cheese Board deferred a decision upon the matter for a future meeting.

Whether a system of licensing factories be the wisest plan or not, something certainly should be done to improve the sanitary condition of many of our cheese and butter factories. Compulsory measures should not be needed to induce dairymen to conduct their businesses in the best possible way. But if they will not be influenced by reason and common sense, some means should be adopted to bring them to time. Every poor, unsanitary and badly equipped factory is injuring Canada's reputation for high class dairy products and lessening the profits of those who have a desire to conduct the business in the best way. If all the cheese made in one district were of a quality equal to the very best made therein, the whole product would sell for a higher price. Buyers nowadays work on a system of averages and in many cases do not pay enough for the product of the very best factories and too much for that of the poorer factories, and by averaging the prices up make a profit on the whole lot. That is, the product of the best factories helps to sell that of the neighboring factories making a much inferior quality. This condition of affairs should not be. The goods should be bought on their merits. There is, in our opinion, not enough discrimination, in price as between the product of good and bad factories made at our local cheese markets. Because of this lack of discrimination the poor, unsanitary and badly equipped factories flourish, and if such a condition is to continue there should be some system of regulating matters and bringing all the factories up to the same standard. A system of licensing factories under proper inspection opens a way for overcoming the difficulty and is well worth careful consideration by dairymen whose views we shall be pleased to have on this question.

Nova Scotia Fruit Interests

For some time the Nova Scotia fruit growers and shippers have had a grievance against the steamship companies sailing from Halifax. They complain that the steamers do not run often enough, they are not fast enough, and are not properly ventilated, etc. Through these drawbacks, the province every year, especially if there