

The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

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EDITORIAL.

Put the ice in early.

The good feeder sees that mangers and feed troughs are kept clean.

The people of Canada have elected a Union Government and they expect results.

Some of the changes made "for the duration of the war" might well be extended to peace times.

The shortage of coal should prove an incentive to the further development of electric power in this country.

The United States is going to control its own railways for the good of the nation. Canada might well follow the example.

The critic who tears down and has nothing to put in the place of what he destroys never rises to a very high level in the affairs of men.

The elector who didn't take enough interest in the municipal election to go out and vote need not grumble at the incompetence of the council elected.

The Junior Farmers' Improvement Association has a wide field of usefulness ahead of it. The hope of agricultural organization in Old Ontario lies in the young men.

How can the Kaiser make peace with a Socialist Russia and deny socialists in his own country the right of free discussion of Germany's war aims? It will not work.

British breweries, we are told, are to be allowed to increase their output twenty per cent. Drinking seems to be more essential than eating in these times of so-called food shortage.

If farm poultry received the same careful attention that dairy cows, beef cattle, hogs, sheep or grain growing does on the average farm, the hen would show results for her owner.

How long would you like to live in a house with no more daylight in it than have some underground stables? You wouldn't last long, whether you liked it or not. Healthful conditions are necessary for live stock.

Keep a few choice roots of mangels and turnips free from frost and plan to grow your own seed this year for 1919. Root and vegetable seeds will be scarce unless Canada grows enough to supply her needs.

Those who buy oleomargarine complain that there is a difference of 10 cents per pound in the price of the product in the United States and in Canada, but then it is a new idea in Canada and, of course, would cost more.

Freight rates in Canada have been increased in order that greater efficiency may result in transportation. Everyone hopes that the increased efficiency soon becomes apparent. It would not do to allow the equipment to fall so far short as to be a further handicap.

Necessary as it is to produce food, it is even more imperative right now that transportation facilities be improved. The big problem is transportation. Full stores of food in America will avail the Allies little in Europe if the food cannot be transported as required.

What the Market Reveals.

A review of the transactions on the Toronto livestock market during the past year, as compared with the previous year, is worth some comment. We often hear statements made regarding the numbers of animals going on the markets and the number in farmers' hands, and sometimes these are misleading. The facts here reiterated were included in the latest Government market report and refer to Toronto market only.

Cattle receipts were about the same in 1917 as they were in 1916. This would indicate a steady effort on the part of the feeders of this class of stock. They are "carrying on" according to well-laid plans, and not jumping hither and thither at every beck and call.

Interesting as this is, however, the fact that a considerable increase was made in the numbers of stockers and feeders returned from this market to the farms for further feeding is of even more importance. In 1916, 26,000 head went back to the farms from Toronto market, while in 1917 over 43,000 head were so sent back for further fitting. This is an increase of 17,000 head, quite an appreciable number. No doubt a number of these went back as a direct result of the efforts of the Live Stock Branch of the Dominion Department of Agriculture in making freight conditions easy for farmers, and placing men on the market to aid in selection and purchase of the stock. At any rate a greater effort has been put forth toward higher finish on the cattle, and it pays to finish well as a general thing.

Some people who are wont to complain tried to make themselves think Canada should put an embargo on beef cattle going to the United States in an effort to bring down the cost of living in this country. Of course, they didn't understand cattle raising, markets and marketing, but for the entire year 1917 only 8,000 cattle went from the Toronto market to the United States, and half these were unfinished. This was 3,000 head fewer than went over in 1916, when 11,000 found their way across, chiefly to Buffalo.

A point of interest to feeders is brought out in the fact that the high point of the cattle market for the year was in May, at \$13 per cwt., and the low point came in September and October, when heavy runs of grass cattle were made. The price has come back and choice cattle went as high as \$12.75 per cwt. in December. This would seem to indicate more grassing of cattle than usual, and we would not wonder at it. Probably a large part of the 43,000 head returned to the farms during the year went back to be grassed off and were again on the market in September and October, which brought the price down. Scarcity of labor in the country is also having a tendency toward less stall feeding and more grass finishing. Feeder prices have been very high in the fall, and this tends to limit the number of cattle put in at that season to be stall fed all winter and turned off in the spring. This, in part, would account for the high-water mark coming in May. There is a point in this: Avoid rushing grassers on the market too fast at the end of the season, if at all possible.

There was no great saving of calves effected in 1917 as compared with 1916, nor was there any great attempt to veal everything as some seemed to think. The farmer's judgment was good and he kept a steady supply going forward, chiefly of calves which were not suitable for raising to maturity. The receipts for the year were on a level with those of 1916.

More attention is being paid to sheep. Prices of wool and mutton have been high, and this is the chief incentive for breeders. The number of lambs increased several thousand on Toronto market, and the top price was \$18.50 per cwt. It looks like good times for the sheep breeder.

For the year, hog receipts were lighter than in 1916. Feeds have been scarce and very high in price. The scarcity in the fall of 1916 sent a large number of brood

sows to the slaughter houses, and litters were fewer in the spring of 1917. July and August were the months of lightest run and poorest quality. In these months the average weight of the hogs marketed was between 160 and 170 pounds, whereas in December this average ran up to 190 to 195 pounds. It is all a question of feed. Farmers are out of feed in July and August, just before the threshing begins, and fewer pigs are sent out then and they are always in poorer fit. Again, sows would be farrowing in cold weather to have pigs reach six or seven months of age in July. For those who can keep the young litter warm and have skim-milk in abundance, it might pay to have a few more litters farrowed in mid-winter and save feed to finish them in July and August to catch the high market. However, young pigs in very cold weather are a risky proposition.

That Cheap Food.

Those who asked that oleomargarine be admitted to this country as a war measure to supply a necessary form of food for the poor man's table, at a price away below the market price for butter, would find some food for thought in market reports of the prices paid by consumers for this product. "The Farmer's Advocate" set forth the case against oleo at the time its entrance into this country was being considered. In that statement we did not contend that it was not a wholesome food, nor do we now. Moreover, all thinking and fair Canadians will agree that anything which will actually help the working man over the hard places in providing for his family at this or any other time should receive the full support of all the people. Those who objected to oleo coming in did so not only as a protection to the dairy industry but also as a protection to consumers. It is necessary to regulate the manufacture and sale of the product to safeguard the people. Only by pointing out the need can adequate regulations be made. The Canadian regulations appear to be well thought out, but oleo has not brought down the cost of living to any appreciable extent to the working man and his family. In our last week's Montreal market report the statement was made that grocers asked 38 cents to 40 cents per pound for oleomargarine, while finest September and October creamery butter sold at 44½ cents to 45 cents per pound, and fine quality one cent per pound lower. In the same report choice dairy butter was quoted at 36 cents to 39 cents per pound—lower than oleomargarine, and choice dairy butter, made in a clean farm household, is good enough for anyone. These figures do not reveal any great saving to those who buy oleo in place of butter. And it has not brought down the price of butter which was selling on this same market a few cents per pound higher in price before oleo was procurable than it was when our last market report was received. Of course, conditions may change. Eventually the price of butter may be affected, but it does seem now that oleo was not really expected to lower the cost of living to the poor man very much. True, it is cheaper than butter in some Canadian cities. It can be bought in London, Ont., for 35 cents per pound, but why should it sell for from 35 cents to 40 cents per pound in Canada when it was quoted in Chicago at the same time as follows: table, 29 cents to 30 cents; cooking, 21 cents to 24 cents? These are questions which the consumer might well ask.

As to the producer of dairy products no great injury to his business has yet manifested itself, beyond a first shock which sent dairy butter down about 5 or 6 cents per pound in some localities, but from which it soon recovered. An upset may come later. There is a butter shortage just now. Creameries are getting very small supplies. This tends to keep the market up. Undoubtedly when the spring flush of grass and fresh cows comes butter will be more plentiful and will drop in price. If it drops much it will also force oleo down,