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## EDITORIAL.

To make a nation great externally we must make great souls first. Civilization is only incidentally a material thing; primarily it is a thing of the soul.—N. Dwight Hillis.

Cropping and live-stock returns reported by "Emerald Isle," coupled with the enterprise of Irishmen in bidding for first-class breeding stock, indicate a betterment in Ireland's material prospects that will be gratifying to well-wishers of that country the world over.

That the United Kingdom should have increased its imports of flour from Canada by nearly 44 per cent. in the three years (1907 to 1909), while imports from the United States fell off by 2,800,000 cwts., is a matter of which Canadian millers may well be proud. It is all the more gratifying in view of the rapid expansion of the British milling industry.

Amid the still all-too-abundant evidence of evil in politics, it is encouraging, every once in a while to find public administrators who conceive it their duty to demand efficiency and honor in the conduct of their departments. The announcement of a complete reorganization of the Government printing bureau, at Ottawa, followed by Hon. Frank Cochrane's declaration that the Ontario fire-ranging service is to be made really effective, instead of a profitable holiday for impecunious students, is along the right line.

Lord Strathcona's generosity in donating half a million dollars for the encouragement of physical drill and military training in Canadian schools, has tended to disarm criticism of his idea. There are those, however, who, while favoring physical drill and recognizing the need of national defence, regard with misgivings the proposal to inaugurate military training in the schools. Nor will the demands of this kind of training upon the limited hours of the school-room make any easier the proper balancing of our rural education by introducing those fundamentally necessary features, nature study, school-gardening, manual training, and domestic science.

An eminent medical authority says all that is necessary to control typhoid is to keep human excreta out of the food and drinking water. This, however, is a much larger contract than might be imagined. Milk may be contaminated by infected water used for washing dairy utensils. Oysters fattened on sewage containing excreta from typhoid patients, have been known to originate an outbreak of the fever. Flies are common offenders. A recent epidemic at Orono, Ont., as a result of which twenty or more patients have died, has been attributed, unofficially, at all events, to the infection of cooked meats by flies believed to have come in contact with the germs from a previous case in the vicinity. Because bacteria are microscopic, the layman often fails to trace connection between cause and effect. The lessons, however, should not be lost. Scrupulous care is the price of safety. Exterminate the filthy house-fly and keep human excreta out of food and water, and typhoid fever will be a thing of the past.

## Co-operation—A New Angle.

That it will not be to the producers' interest to enlarge the output and improve the quality of our farm products, unless we first of all change the market conditions so as to insure against middlemen taking advantage of the large supply to bear down prices, is the claim stoutly put forth by Peter White, K. C., lawyer, farmer and business man, of Pembroke, Ont. As president of a well-known Canadian incubator company, whose interest coincides with the farmer's interest, in that neither desires an over-production to slump prices and bring about a reaction from the poultry business, Mr. White has been forced to give this subject a good deal of thought, and his conclusion is that there is no hope of permanently satisfactory marketing conditions until the middleman has been eliminated, and producers virtually control the market.

Discussing this subject not long ago with "The Farmer's Advocate," he harked back to the correspondence precipitated by the Flavell-Duff open letter, alluding to the position taken by several farmers that they would rather have a small production of, say, hogs at high prices, than a large production at the low prices which the packers might bring about again if over-production enabled them to do so. Evidently, he infers, our Canadian farmers are afraid to place power in the hands of the middleman, who is, in this case, the packer.

Co-operation in marketing is the means by which he would strengthen farmers in the confidence that they might safely enlarge production and improve the quality of their produce. As illustrating his idea, he cites the familiar example of Denmark, as well as the reported experience of onion-growers and other producers in the United States, who, finding themselves ground between the upper millstone of the middlemen and the nether millstone of large production, escaped from their intolerable situation by extensive co-operative organization, which eliminated unnecessary expenses, insured the payment of producers according to quality, and to a large extent controlled the market, obtaining a remunerative price for a good article. Coming home to Canada, he points to the successful efforts of our Western grain-growers to secure the fair and stable grading of their wheat, with the result, it is said, that Canadian wheat is now the standard by which the grades of the world are fixed; also to our cheese industry as having been built up on an extensive, enduring and profitable basis, secured against the depression which middlemen endeavor to bring about whenever large production enables them to depress prices to the producer. Other Canadian examples of co-operation that might be more happily cited at present are the fruit-shipping associations, the co-operative onion-growers' organization at Scotland, Ont.; the Kent County Farmers' Produce Company, at Chatham, and one or two agricultural societies in the Maritime Provinces, which save money for their members by the co-operative purchase of commercial fertilizers and other supplies. All these aim to eliminate one or more middlemen, and some of them at least endeavor to reward the grower who supplies articles of superior quality.

That successful co-operation of this kind is a decided economic advantage, no thinking person will deny. That it promises ultimate benefit to the consumer, and thus to society in general, seems scarcely less clear. That it brings about when adopted a prompt and substantial gain to the producer, is proven by results. But that it

will permanently insure against slumping of prices consequent upon large production, is claiming too much. This has been proven clearly the past summer in the case of the cheese industry, as the widespread murmuring about prices abundantly attests. The fact of the matter is, nothing but a closely-organized monopoly or natural devastation can guarantee against over-production and low prices in any particular line. Make a certain business profitable by co-operation or otherwise and you attract more producers to it, and thus reduce profits automatically. In the case of the cheese industry, the result seems to have been brought about partially by a slackening demand, but the principle is all the same. Relatively to other commodities, the production of cheese is at present too large for the demand.

Nor is it correct to contend, as some have seemed to imply, that the margin between five-cent and ten-cent hogs was due wholly or largely to a difference in the packers' opportunity to bear prices. Granting that the packer tries when he can—just as do all other classes of business men—to buy cheap and sell dear, it is nevertheless absurd to argue that he can succeed in depressing prices more than fractionally, unless at rare intervals. If the packers had been regularly "Jeweling" hog-raisers to the extent of two or three cents a pound, it is hard to see how our co-operative pork-packing plants could have failed, badly managed and poorly supported as they probably were. And even if they had failed, other private capital seeking investment would have flown into the packing business and furnished competition, if there were none before. We hold no brief for the packers, and heartily agree that if co-operation could save the farmer an eighth or a quarter of a cent a pound on his hogs, or could insure the payment of a premium for quality, it would be well worth while. To say that it could do much more than this is to be guilty of careless statement. The hundred-per-cent. profits reported to have been made by one packing company were accumulated not by doubling its money on a few thousand hogs, but by a small percentage of profits on a large turnover.

The fact of the matter is, our middlemen do not to any great extent control either the buying or the selling market. They are, for the most part, a buffer between producer and consumer. Undoubtedly, they at times hold and use power to modify prices, and this power we would be glad to see placed in the producers' hands. Undoubtedly, also, for their services as speculators and jobbers, they exact a percentage toll. They must do so, or they could not live. This toll, likewise, we would fain see in the producers' wallet, though we must remember that, if he went to the expense of providing storage facilities and holding his produce for a raise, it would cost him a proportion, at least, of the middleman's present toll. Undoubtedly, too, middlemen are often an awkward snag in the securing of payment on a basis of quality. It has proved so with apples, eggs, cool-cured cheese, and many other commodities. For this further reason we would heartily welcome the elimination of the middleman. We believe in co-operation, and have preached it repeatedly. But we must not exaggerate its benefits. We know its history in Canada—how difficult it is to get farmers to co-operate, and how much harder still to keep them together, working smoothly on the principle of each for all. As a general thing, successful co-operation has been born of desperate conditions which have driven producers together of neces-