

Farm and Dairy

AND

Rural Home

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The Rural Publishing Company, Ltd.
PETER ORO AND TORONTO

"Read not to contradict and to converse, nor to believe and take for granted but to weigh and consider."—Hacon.

Price Control

PRICE control has become the established order. The Dominion Government, through its Board of Grain Supervisors, has decreed that the remainder of the 1916 wheat crop shall be marketed on a basis of \$2.40 for No. 1 Northern in store at Fort William. A similar disposal of prices on the present harvest is contemplated. Meatless and baconless days have been introduced as a means of conserving the supply and, incidentally, lowering the price on these products of the farm. In the United States the food controller is clothed with even more arbitrary powers than our own dictators, and that country, we may safely assume, will not be far behind Canada in regulating the farmers' markets.

But why should price regulation be limited to the products of the farm? Other commodities also are soaring in price. If food control is justifiable so also would it be right to regulate the selling price of leather goods, machinery, clothing and wages. Almost any line of manufactured products are being produced at greater profit than either wheat or meat. If they are not, then why is capital and labor flowing into these industries to the detriment of agriculture? What seems difficult for our legislators to understand is that, from a business standpoint, the farming industry has never been profitable, and that, even with present high prices, the farmer's return on his investment is not great enough to be attractive to moneyed men. Why then such a strenuous endeavor to keep down the market price of commodities that are produced with a minimum of profit?

The Farmers' Service

FARMERS feel, and rightly, that the service that they have rendered the state in the last three years, entitles them to the utmost consideration from the Government and all other classes when legislative control of prices is suggested. No other class in Canada have made sacrifices in behalf of production that are comparable with the sacrifices made by the farmers of the land. While the people of the towns have worked the usual number of hours and enjoyed their usual amount of leisure the men and women of the country have been working more strenuously than ever before. With help at a vanishing point through enlistment and migration to munition plants the women have added their services and have kept agricultural production up to normal. Many hundreds of farm women have this year, for the first time, built loads and mowed back hay and they are now handling sheaves; this, in addition to caring for their homes and little ones. Had country people insisted on the stated hours and time for recreation that are the rule in our cities families would have been a reality and national bankruptcy a certainty.

After the sacrifices that he has made, is the farmer not justified in hoping that the markets will be strong enough to recompense him, in part at least, for his extra labor? And until the farmer receives a just return for his expense, time and investment no other class in the community have a right to complain of the price of farm products. We venture to state that, averaging the returns of our farms for the last three years, recompensing the farmer and his family for the number of hours worked at the same rate that city help has scoffed at, paying all expenses and allowing a fair business rate for depreciation, the farmers who have noted five per cent. on their investment are the exception rather than the rule. Surely this is not extortionate? Certainly it is not enough to justify arbitrary action with the object of keeping down prices. We know that it is argued that Government action is intended merely to eliminate speculation and ensure fair prices all around, but interference with the law of supply and demand is always a dangerous expedient. If prices are set too low production will be discouraged. If set too high consumers have a just grievance. Where is the body of men that can adjust the balance with the necessity of the unfettered law of supply and demand. And could not injurious speculation in foodstuffs be held in check just as efficiently by limiting the produce exchanges to cash transactions and, perhaps, forbidding trading in futures as by price fixing?

More Wheat for 1918

WHAT about the wheat crop of 1918? The Ontario hay crop of 1917 is almost a record breaker. Barns are full and stacks abound. Many farmers are preparing to stack every sheaf of their grain, because their barns are already bulging with hay. With coarse grains and straw both plentiful this year, much hay will have to be carried over for another season. Because of this surplus of roughage the commission of Conservation suggests that many of the old meadows, which would otherwise be held over for hay in 1918, could and should be in view of the world's need of foodstuffs, be utilized for producing grain, such as fall rye and wheat. If the land is plowed now a good seed bed could be prepared. If it is desired to get the fields back into hay, timothy seed at the rate of ten pounds per acre could be sown along with the grain this fall and the clover sown in the spring.

A difficulty in the way of increasing the winter wheat area is that during the usual plowing season the ground has been too dry. What little plowing has been done has been at the expense

of haying and the cultivation of hood crops. With rains immediately after harvest, however, and with the help of tractors, which have become numerous during the summer, thousands of acres of land could still be gotten ready for fall grains. And, as the Commission of Conservation suggests, many acres of meadow might be included in the fall plowing and fall seeding.

The Beautiful Farmstead

UGLINESS is not a virtue. Usefulness and beauty may go hand in hand. Usefulness does not interfere with beauty, nor does beauty interfere with usefulness. The farmstead, including both dwelling and farm buildings, will be planned first for efficiency, if the farmer be as sound a business man as he should be, but, the home, to develop the best family life, must be beautiful; unsightly buildings, no matter how useful and comfortable, will always be a thorn in the flesh to the more sensitive members of the family.

Our forefathers, the men who cleared away the forests and laid the foundations of an Empire in the new world, were not overly concerned as to the appearance of their farmsteads. The conditions under which they lived were too hard, their duties were too onerous. But we, of this generation, have passed the pioneering stage. We should be looking forward to other fields of progress. The slogan: "More, and yet more beautiful farm homes," already adopted in some of the older states of the American union, is one for which we, in the older sections of both Eastern and Western Canada, are now ready. The application of the slogan demands more paint, more plumbing, and perhaps, in some cases, extensive remodeling. A large order, perhaps, but then the beautification of a rural home is important enough to be the work of several years, each improvement being made as finances allow, but all improvements according to a carefully prearranged plan.

One Crop Farming

GRAIN farming is a necessary evil in a new country. The Western farmer has grown grain and burned his straw stacks in an effort to make a start with little capital in a new country. On such a system of farming, however, no permanently successful agriculture can be founded. At first, Nature may be good to the settler, but the end of her bounty is now in sight. Mr. S. G. Porter, of Calgary, put the question tersely to an audience of Western farmers when he spoke as follows:

Every farm is a factory, and the fertility of the soil is the capital stock. How to make the factory most productive is the proposition. You certainly cannot draw on your capital stock to pay dividends. In other words, it will not do to fool yourself into using up your soil fertility and calling it profit. The capital stock, or fertility, of Western Canada's soil is nearly always rich, but it will not continue so under the usual one-crop method of farming."

"That Western farmers are coming to realize their position is shown by the steadily increasing live stock population on Western farms, a population that has increased several hundred fold in the last couple of decades. Not the least satisfactory aspect of Western development is the steady growth of the dairy industry. A small dairy herd on the grain farm means steady employment, a steady income, abolition of store credit and a more satisfactory financial situation generally for prairie farmers. Also, in time, the value of dairy cattle as soil builders will come to be appreciated, even on the fertile prairies of the Canadian West.

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