

POULTRY YARD

Poultrymen Interview Mr. Fisher

A body of representative poultrymen waited on the Hon. Sydney Fisher, Minister of Agriculture, in Ottawa, last week with a view to having some changes made, and some assistance given, for the benefit of the poultry industry. The poultrymen who made up the deputation were: A. A. Armstrong, Fenwick, Ont.; W. R. Graham, Guelph; Brother Ligouri, La Trappe, Que.; A. P. Hillhouse, Bonville, Que.; E. Rhoades, Macdonald College; Prof. F. C. Elford, Macdonald College; A. W. Foley, Edmonton, Alta.; J. I. Brown, Montreal; and H. C. Duff, Norwood, Ont.

The recommendations laid before the Minister were:

1.—That a Poultry Commissioner be appointed, his duties being to study the question from a national standpoint, taking up such questions as markets, standards, diseases and kindred subjects.

2.—That there be established under the direction of the Poultry Commissioner a department of scientific research along the lines of poultry diseases, and that scientifically trained men be appointed to take charge of the work.

3.—That the Department of Agriculture assume the responsibility or at least the expense of the work and make an annual grant sufficient to pay the secretary's salary and defray all incidental expenses, the Association to remain, as at present, an independent organization with its own elected officers, as in the case with the Seed Growers' Association. The association would work in co-operation with the Poultry Commissioner. It was recommended that the department should publish a bulletin dealing with the care and handling of eggs and poultry, the marketing of the same, and the work of the Poultry Producers' Association along with rules for co-operative poultry circles.

4.—That the present poultry plant at the Experimental Farm, Ottawa, be given to the use of the Poultry Commissioner in the investigation of poultry diseases and so forth.

5.—That Prof. A. G. Gilbert be relieved of the personal supervision and management of the poultry plant at the Experimental Farm and his services be recognised and retained by appointing him Chief Lecturer for the Dominion, attached to the Poultry Commissioner's Staff.

Hon. Mr. Fisher did not commit himself as to a Poultry Commissioner. Something is already being done in the study of poultry diseases, a progressive policy would be continued in this regard. Financial assistance to the Poultry Producers' Association was assured.

Ducks for Profit

A. G. Taylor, Jacques Cartier Co., Que.

There are few farmers in Canada devoting any time or study to the rearing and marketing of ducks. Perhaps this is, to a large extent, due to the fact that they do not realize the income that may be derived from this industry. So little has been written about ducks compared with that relating to the hen that people are apt to think this branch of the poultry industry unimportant. When farmers stop to consider the advantages in favor of duck raising, there will be an increase in the yield of this valuable product.

Ducks are less liable to disease than fowl. This is one thing that speaks well in their favor. Many farmers fear to venture into duck raising because they consider they have not the natural facilities; no pond or stream to provide exercise for the ducks. This is a serious mistake. Ducks will thrive equally well if there is no pond or stream in connection with the farm. All they require, as regards water, is an abundance of fresh drinking water. It is almost impossible to get young growing ducklings in market condition if allowed freedom on a pond or stream.

Duck breeders are becoming impressed with the fact that it is not "What will a duck stand?" but "How much will a duck stand?" It is a common thing to see young ducklings almost covered with mud and enjoying it. I do not advise that ducks require mud to induce growth. Far from it. But I do want it to be clearly understood that in conditions where chickens would certainly die, ducks would consider themselves in clover.

The housing of breeding ducks even in cold weather is a very simple proposition—a double boarded house that will keep out the snow and storm answers the purpose well. Ducks are not particular as to their food. The common saying is that "a duck will eat it's head off before it is ready for market in the autumn." Perhaps there is some truth in the saying, but why should a duck that is intended for market, hatched say in April or May, be allowed its freedom until fall? The management is at fault here. A duckling should reach the market stage at from 8 to 10 weeks and weigh 10 to 12 lbs. a pair dressed.

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