

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

A correspondent writes to the Food Controller asking for information on three points, about which, he says, the people of Canada are very much in the dark:—

"1. Why President Wilson in the United States found it necessary to bring down the price of bread somewhere to the point where it is in Canada to-day?"

Bread has been 11½ cents per pound in the United States for some time, and 7 to 8 cents per pound in Canada. By cutting down the amount of fat and sugar in the bread, the Food Administrator of the United States hopes to bring the price in that country to a point somewhere where it has been in Canada.

"2. Why flour is made from wheat bought a considerable time before, and why it takes time for bread prices to drop, even after wheat has fallen away in price for a considerable period?"

On the face of it one would think that bread would follow immediately up and down in price as wheat rose and fell, but trade conditions are not the same in both commodities. When wheat had risen to \$3.15 per bushel a sufficient number of bakers had laid in a considerable stock of flour at cheaper prices beforehand to continue the old scale for some time after. Many bakers contracted a year ahead for flour made from 1916 wheat. The smaller men who could not carry large stocks and who had to compete with the larger bakers lost money on their output.

The large bakers later came into the same condition and were also forced to lose money. The price of bread has never, as a matter of fact, advanced in direct relation to the price of wheat. There are two things to take into consideration: With a rise in wheat there is a natural business tendency to raise the price of bread. Flour increases in quality the longer it is kept, within certain limits, and is, therefore, more valuable and necessarily dearer, in ordinary circumstances. These two facts are significant: The average price of bread to-day is about the average price of bread during 1916; bread has not gone up in proportion with the price of wheat.

"3. Why it comes about that unless milk producers are able to get present prices for their milk, many of them will go out of business. The impression is that milk producers should not get famine prices for grain grown on farms where the only extra cost is that of labour and seed?"

A farm may easily be turned from one kind of production to another. If the profit on the feed fed to cows to produce milk is not equal to the profit when the grain is sold for beef or hogs or the profit when the grain can be sold for direct human consumption, the farmer will turn his attention in these other directions of profit. The return from milk production must also provide an inducement over and above the profit on other lines of farm production, sufficient to compensate for the unusual difficulties and hardships which dairying involves.

Q. What was the cost of distributing the pledge cards? Where the canvassers paid?

A. The entire cost of the pledge cards was \$5 per 1,000 and not one cent was paid by the Food Controller to any man, woman or child in the Dominion for the distribution of them. It was entirely voluntary work; and the result of the saving of foodstuffs for export in one day in Canada by those who signed the cards would pay many times over the entire cost of the cards. Many people were told that the pledge card distribution was a trick of the Government whose agents would commandeer all their foodstuffs. These and similar falsehoods were circulated systematically throughout Canada and the United States.

IT APPLIES TO MOLASSES.

Reports have recently been published in certain newspapers that large quantities of raw sugar and molasses are being used in making alcohol when they might be saved for food purposes. The intention and effect of the Order in Council of November 2 is to prohibit the use of any foodstuff for the production of whiskey and other distilled beverages, and this applies to molasses as well as to other food materials. Alcohol is required in the manufacture of munitions and for other industrial purposes and is an ingredient in methylated spirits, vinegar and certain drug preparations. It may not be produced legally for any other purposes. If molasses, which could be refined for the manufacture of sugar or syrup, is now used in the distillation of potable liquors, such use constitutes an offence against the law of Canada and is subject to heavy penalties. The Order in Council has the same effect as any other Federal law and persons who may have knowledge that it is being violated should inform the police authorities.