

The Organization of the Farm Business.

Awarded Second Prize at the Public Speaking Contest.

By C. M. FLATT, '21.

SINCE Agriculture became of sufficient importance to be recognized as an industry in Ontario there have been several different forms of organization of the farm business, each the result of changing conditions over which the farmer had little or no control.

The pioneers grew on their clearings three main crops, namely, oats, barley and wheat. As horses were necessary for any form of farming, they grew oats to feed their horses. Because beer was deemed a necessary beverage in those days they grew barley for malting purposes, and, finally, that they might exist, themselves, they cultivated wheat. Their farms were organized for the production of these crops until the United States Government passed legislation prohibiting the importation of barley. As a result the Canadian farmers were forced to find a new outlet for their barley or cease to produce it. They turned to the breeding of live stock, feeding their barley to finish heavy steers for the export market in Great Britain. This form of organization in the farm business continued for a time, until another act of legislation, this time by the British Government, changed conditions. This act prohibited the importation of live stock on foot into the British Isles. For a time the live stock business was at a standstill, until a new export trade was built up in cured meats.

During the changes the population of the country was gradually increasing, and new phases of agriculture developed. The two most important of these were due to and at first largely dependent upon this increase in population. While later the export market for the product of these new lines of the industry had some influence on their growth, yet at no time was their development anything but gradual. The introduction of more varieties of crops and different products lessened materially the acreage in grain crops and resulted in the introduction of what is known as mixed or diversified farming.

This short sketch of the development of agriculture in Ontario shows that up to the present time the different forms of organization in the farm business were not selected by the farmer but rather forced upon him.

But when we examine conditions existing to-day we find a different state of affairs. With few exceptions there is a ready market for all farm products at prices very nearly equal, considering the cost of production. As a result, the farmer of to-day can practically choose for himself the form of organization that he desires his farm business to assume. No matter in what form his products are marketed they give fair returns. He can control the selection of crops and how they are