

Sheep Breeders' Meeting at Guelph.

A meeting of Ontario Sheep Breeders and the Agricultural Representatives was held in Guelph on July 16. During the morning a visit was made to the wool-grading warehouse, and the process of putting up wool for shipment, receiving it at the warehouse, grading it, packing it, and checking up the individual shipments in preparation for paying the wool grower was fully explained by R. W. Wade and his staff. Upwards of three-quarters of a million pounds of wool have been received at the Ontario grading station at Guelph. This has been sold through the Canadian Co-operative Wool Growers' Association along with the wool from the other provinces at a very remunerative figure.

The Ontario Sheep Breeders provided an excellent banquet for upwards of one hundred guests, at which Dr. Creelman was toast master. Hon. Geo. Henry, M. P. P., recently appointed Minister of Agriculture, was present and gave an interesting address in which he complimented the wool growers on the good work they had accomplished and encouraged the co-operative marketing movement. Jas. Douglas, of Caledonia, President of Sheep Breeders' Association, gave a resume of the grading work since its inception.

In 1917 only 1,500 wool growers marketed their wool through the grading station, while in 1918 there were 3,450. The County of Wellington led in number of sheepmen sending in wool. The growers were advised to send in their applications early and to carefully follow instructions regarding tying up the fleece and shipping so as to facilitate the work at the grading station and to lessen risk of errors being made in the accounts. A greater percentage of the wool went into the higher grades than was the case last year, which showed that better care had been taken of the flocks and of the fleece.

W. A. Dryden discussed the work of the Canadian Co-operative Wool Growers' Association and explained how the wool was sold direct from grower to manufacturer at the highest price and at the least possible expense. The provincial organizations centralize the clip of the province and prepare it for market, while the Co-operative Association do the selling and provide credit so that the grower receives a percentage of his money at time of shipment and before a sale is made. It is encouraging to note an improvement in quality of wool which the speaker mentioned as being due to the use of better sires and to the care and feeding of the flock. Mr. Dryden considered the increased dog tax as being insufficient for the prevention of dogs worrying sheep, and suggested that every dog in the county be tagged so that the owner could be found and made responsible for loss. This he believed would do a good deal towards the elimination of the cur and the housing of the good dog at night.

The Manager of the Co-operative Association, T. Reg. Arkell, gave a resume of the wool-grading scheme from the time it was started, leading up to the

formation of the Co-operative Association. About four and one-half million pounds of wool will be handled through the Co-operative this year, and the Ontario clip has been sold to Canadian mills.

The estimate of receipts of wool from the Provinces are as follows: British Columbia, 600,000 pounds; Southern Alberta, 1,250,000 pounds; Northern Alberta, 600,000 pounds; Saskatchewan, 700,000 pounds; Manitoba, 400,000 pounds; Ontario, 700,000 pounds; Quebec, 380,000 pounds; Maritime Provinces, 400,000 pounds. The Ontario prices are: medium combing, 76½ cents a pound; low medium combing, 73½ cents; low combing, 67 cents; clothing, 63½ cents; coarse, 60½ cents. It is believed that the wool from Quebec and Maritime Provinces will run a little higher in price owing to there being less shrinkage.

THE FARM.

The Agricultural Situation in Britain.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE"

It can be declared openly and frankly that the whole of Britain's agricultural policy is being changed—if not actually reconstructed. The prime move to plow up so many thousands of acres devoted to grassland, and go to stock raising in the main, has been attended with considerable success and has been attended, or followed, by many other alterations in our systems. First, an agricultural wages board has been set up, with a central office in London and branches in all the counties. Wages of the agricultural laborer have been fixed at thirty shillings per week—a double rise for some laborers in a few counties. To meet this heavy additional cost upon production the Government has fixed its prices for all cereals—establishing a minimum and a maximum which will slide up and down according to a set principle.

The yield of the 1917 harvest has more than justified the changed conditions brought about by the Government, although it is due to the farmers to say that 95 per cent. of them loyally fell in with their schemes and wishes. The remaining five per cent. either went out of cultivation or else had their lands entered and someone with grit and backbone put in to work the derelict land at a profit. The difference in yield of the cereals and potatoes in 1917 as compared with 1916 was one of 4,000,000 tons and was a very welcome asset and greatly alleviated the difficulties of the situation in feeding the nation. In view of the fact that the active intervention of the State to increase home production had become only partially operative in time for the harvest of 1917, and that its full effects will become much more apparent in the harvest of 1918, it may reasonably be

hoped that the food problem will not again be so acute and anxious as it was between the harvest of 1916 and that of 1917.

As well as bringing all that is good out of agriculture during the war, a scheme of reconstruction has been evolved for settling soldier colonies on the land as small holders, i.e., holdings from three to ten acres in size. There will be bigger holdings to be run as experimental farms and training farms—a phase of farming instruction Old England has been woefully weak in in days gone by, for the simple reason that the British farmer "kidded" to himself that he knew it all and he hadn't any need to go to school to learn how to spread muck on a field for he learned that as a boy, when his father gave him threepence a day as pay during his school holidays.

If I read the future of British agriculture aright, more small holdings for practical farm laborers will be made by the Government. We have in the past had two or three schemes for putting men on the land as small farmers, but they have failed because the men who got them were not allowed to buy them but merely had to pay a yearly rental to the County Councils, which bodies had charge of them. Now if those schemes had been so made out that the land became the property of the tenants, or their children, in forty years' time, it would have deepened the interest of the workers and given them an ideal to struggle for—ownership as against mere tenancy. Then again some of the young men who got hold of the holdings so created, had no experience and they kept out the genuine clients, the farm laborers, stockmen, and others who had struggled for years on a miserable pittance, a few shillings a week and a dingy cottage very often condemned by the sanitary authorities. But times are also changing and these experienced farm hands are to have their chance of going on to the land as small-holders. They are to have good clean and sound cottages built for them, and they can bring up their invariably large families in decency. The orchards here seem to be well fruited, although the story is not the same in the Midland Counties of England. Cereals promise to be a good crop all round this year. Roots are having rather too dry a time of it, but the potato crop promises to be a bumper one. Allotments are to be seen everywhere, on every spare scrap of land and here and there a pig in his sty—raised by enthusiasts to meet the food situation bravely and with profit. England is still at heart an agricultural nation, despite its industries and its maritime trade. The most ancient of industries and the most far-reaching of all British industries—agriculture—is in for a much needed revival. It has languished long enough. It was nearly down and out. Now it has its tail well up. We are going to produce more of our own food. We are not going to be reliant upon the Hollander with his margarine and the Dane with his bacon and his butter. We can make all those things ourselves if we are encouraged, and we are being so assisted by the Government.

ALBION.

Canada's Young Farmers and Future Leaders.

From Producer to Consumer.

It has been stated by various speakers and writers that the percentage of the final selling price of farm products which the farmer receives, varies from 35 per cent. to 50 per cent. Rarely, if ever, have men dared to say that more than half of what the consumer pays reaches the farmer. Isolated instances of certain products might and doubtless can be found where such might be the case, but, generally speaking, the percentage is below rather than above 50 per cent. For years the unrest among farmers has been very pronounced owing to this very condition of affairs, but until recently not much has really done been to remedy matters. The very fact that farming is more or less of a family proposition has made it practically impossible to inaugurate steps which would rapidly bring about a satisfactory adjustment in the way of an increased percentage to the producer of the retail price paid by the consumer. At the present time, so far as opportunity for money making in farming is concerned, conditions are better than they were a few years ago, but a great many farmers are finding it difficult to take advantage of the opportunity. Consumers are not slow to see the increase in prices paid for farm produce, but utterly fail to realize, in the main, the small chance the farmer has of greatly profiting by these prices. Consequently, the cry is raised and carried from one consumer to another that farmers are to blame for the increased cost of living. Even before the war this sentiment was evident in all our cities, but very unfortunately for the farmer, the war has, in addition to creating conditions which baffle his very effort to circumvent them, added the irony of fate to an already intolerable situation and increased the denunciations from the consumers to a dangerous extent.

Mere denials of even mildly excessive profits are of no avail; they serve to excite fresh bursts of frenzy and so we come to the conclusion that it is better to ignore than to deny even a palpable falsehood. But can the condition be remedied from the standpoint of the producer. Efforts have been made in past teachings of co-operation to point out how co-operation among producers could and would lower prices to consumers. Perhaps it would, but admirable as such a condition of affairs would be for the thousands of toilers in our cities, there are other things of more immediate concern to the farmer, which it behooves him to look to first. The farmer's first object is to see that he secures for his labor a fair share of what the consumer pays; it is for the con-

sumer to see that he does not buy in the dearest market. There is no selfishness in this attitude on the part of the farmer, since if he does not look after his own interests, no one else is likely to, unless the backwardness of the farmer is likely to affect the pocketbook of the other classes and then efforts of a sort will be forthcoming. The average consumer need never be expected to help the producer; in fact it would not be logical to expect him to do so. His purpose is to get produce as cheaply as possible just as it is the farmer's hope to get more for what he raises.

Because of a prejudiced opinion of farming, consumers blame the producer for the high cost of living, but as someone remarked a few years ago "it is not the high cost of living from which he is suffering but the high cost of stupid living." Frantic efforts are being made in urban centres now to reduce the cost of living by a reduction in the amount of "service" demanded of the retailer. Frequent deliveries of small parcels, telephone orders, quick service and other attentions of like nature demanded by the city dweller, are beginning to assume a place in the cost of living schedule. "Cash and carry" stores are being established and the retailer, quick to sense retrenchment on the part of his customers is just as quick to take advantage of every fad. Naturally this is beginning at the wrong end, just as some farmers think the Government should right some wrongs that could be better righted by themselves. Co-operation would help the consumer just as it has helped the farmer in many cases, but getting together is perhaps even more difficult among consumers than among producers. As an example, however, it may be stated that in 1909 the retail co-operative societies in Great Britain did a total business of \$700,000,000, in round numbers, upon which there was a net saving of more than 15 per cent, or approximately \$98,000,000. The English Co-operative Wholesale Society, a consumers' organization, made in 1911 a profit of nearly \$2,900,000, or 2.07 per cent. of the turnover, or a little more than the maximum profit allowed the Canadian pork packing plants at the present time.

There are equal savings to be made by co-operation on the part of producers and there is no need to quote one or more of the many examples which could be quoted to prove the point. The chief difficulty is, first, to get producers to stand together long enough to reap the benefit of co-operation and, in the second place, once co-operation has begun to return a cash dividend, to prevent producers and consumers from overlapping in each other's territory. Of course, we are told, the

"unnecessary middleman" must be eliminated. Very good, but it has been proven difficult in the past to pick him out from his thousands of twin brothers. There doubtless are too many little middlemen, each making a living from the producer and the consumer, but the middleman can never be eliminated. He may be controlled but it is more likely that producers will eventually hire someone to do a part of his work, while the consumer may eventually hire some more men to do the remainder of it. In any case, someone must do the work of the middleman. There has been some talk of farmers establishing retail stores to be managed by their co-operative societies. This would be a very sad mistake if it were generally adopted: it never can live long enough in a successful way to become generally adopted. Producers can co-operate successfully to such an extent as to sell large quantities of produce by wholesale; the rest of the problem of distribution is entirely up to the consumer and if he does not care to, or cannot see far enough ahead to tackle the job of retailing it to himself, it is his own funeral. For the producer to carry the business of distributing his own products past the wholesale stage would be folly and would probably be as profitless as it would be educative.

To spread and effectually put into practice the great doctrine of co-operation is a task worth the best energy of all the younger generation of farmers in Eastern Canada to-day. There is no doubt that co-operation will come in time, if conditions get bad enough to force its general adoption. At present, the circumstances surrounding the farmer are bad, but not bad enough for co-operation in the marketing of farm produce to flourish as it might. Co-operative purchase is easier to bring about and may serve to bring about initial organization, which may ultimately be used for the control of the middlemen now engaged in the distribution of farm produce.

Judging for the Standing Field Crop Competitions is now in progress, or will be shortly, in many districts. Knowing the importance of pure seed, judges should perform their work with all possible care and skill. Competitors also should remember that judges are, in the majority of cases, selected for their knowledge of injurious weeds and their ability to judge standing crops, and should abide by the award made, realizing that the greatest good can only be secured by a hearty support of any movement which will help to improve the quality of the seed grain in general use.