

#### **XIV.—THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE CANADIAN BACON INDUSTRY.**

While each of the provinces of Canada contributes hogs to the bacon industry, from 75 to 85 per cent of the annual pack comes from Ontario farms. The hogs raised in Quebec up to quite recently have been consumed largely within the province. An effort has been made by the Dominion Department of Agriculture to improve and increase the hog stock of Quebec by introducing, by a system of auction sales, hogs suitable to the requirements of the export trade. In the maritime provinces the raising of hogs is not as extensively carried on as it should be. In fact, only in the dairying sections are any produced for packing. The farmers of Prince Edward Island are doing more proportionately in this regard than the other Atlantic provinces, but the output of hogs for 1906 was considerably less than during 1904, and only a comparatively small proportion reached the export trade. In the west there may be important developments within the next few years. Damaged wheat, cheap coarse grains and the influx of United States farmers all point to increased hog raising, and the consequent establishment of packing centres at western points.

The production of hogs made marked progress in Canada during the fifteen years ending 1905. Since then considerable decrease in production has taken place. In 1890 there were about 200,000 hogs marketed; in 1904 1,700,000; while in 1906 the number was 1,300,000. In 1890 there were but two packing houses in the export trade, with a weekly capacity of perhaps 3,000; in 1906 19 packing houses, with a capacity of at least 65,000 a week, were in operation. According to the statements of the managers of these various houses at no time have these institutions been taxed to cope with the hogs offering. In fact, the supply has not exceeded from 20,000 to 35,000 hogs weekly, according to the season of the year, so that conditions have favoured an active competition for the hogs.

The output of Canadian packing houses is largely exported. Eighty-five per cent of the total pack finds its way to the English market. Great Britain's weekly supply of bacon during the year comes from the various sources as follows:—From the United States the product of about 70,000 hogs; Denmark, about 35,000; Canada, about 30,000; Ireland, about 10,000, and continental Europe the product of about 5,000 hogs per week.

It will thus be seen that Canadian bacon is about 20 per cent of the total quantity imported by Great Britain. This, considering the importance of our agricultural and dairying industries, can scarcely be regarded as a satisfactory percentage. Moreover, we are scarcely holding our position in relation to other countries. Denmark has improved her position during the last seven years by about 40 per cent, while during that time Canadian exports have been practically stationary.

Numerous causes may be cited for the difference in the progress made in hog raising by Canada and Denmark. In the latter country a thorough system of co-operation is in progress not only in a united endeavour to produce hogs of only the desired weights and form, but also to keep up a regular supply throughout the year and from year to year. In Canada it is quite different. While the improvement in the quality of hogs produced has for a number of years been very general, it has not been nearly so pronounced as it would have been with greater co-operation. Nor is the supply of hogs in Canada so regular as in Denmark, either throughout the year or from season to season. Raising hogs in fair quantity when prices are high, going out of them, in whole or in part, when prices are low, too many farmers deny themselves the advantage of a good average price, and make impossible a steady inroad into the English bacon market, which must have quantity—and steady quantity at that—to back it up. Such spasmodic support spells ruin to the Canadian bacon trade, because the