

## Mixed Farming in Ontario

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EDITOR'S NOTE—J. C. Neale won the prize for the best thesis written by second year students on the prescribed topic. We publish here the complete thesis which does the writer credit.

**M**IXED Farming—what is it, and wherein does it differ from other types of farming? Mixed farming is the producing of several kinds of farm products upon the same farm, under the supervision of the same manager. Other types of farming tend to specialize in the production of one or two particular classes of articles.

The history of Mixed Farming in Ontario dates back to the time of the earliest settlers. These pioneers went forth into the wilderness, where they were forced to depend, almost entirely, upon their own resources. There were no markets where they might sell that which they chose to produce nor buy that which was necessary to maintain life; they were forced by the grim hand of necessity to produce enough upon their small clearings to enable them to "keep the wolf from the door." Hence was evolved our present system of Mixed Farming, which has come down to us through the generations, modified, to some extent, according to the progress of civilization, and to meet the demands of the markets developed in the growing towns and cities, but the essential of which is the same today as it was in the days of our great-grandfathers.

This system of farming, as it is pursued today, has many advantages, some disadvantages and many latent possibilities. Let us consider these in the order mentioned, though perhaps digressing somewhat as they merge, one into the other.

The chief source of Ontario's food supply lies in her mixed farms. Up

to the present, the specialized farm has not displaced the mixed farm to any appreciable extent. It is true that some types of specialized farming offer opportunities for larger financial gains than does mixed farming, but, where there exists this possibility for great gain, so also is the possibility for great loss to be found in equal proportion. This law accounts for the stability of the mixed farming industry in the Province of Ontario and for its introduction into the Provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, where specialized farming has been proven, more or less, a failure. To be successful, specialized farming requires the most favorable circumstances, while mixed farming may be carried on, with fair success, under an almost unlimited variation of conditions. Thus, while the probabilities of the mixed farmer's amassing a large fortune are somewhat small, the possibilities of his being forced into bankruptcy are equally small.

This condition of affairs affects not only the farmer himself, but the Province, and even the Country as a whole. To what are we indebted for the total absence of famine in the Province of Ontario? Is it not to our system of mixed farming, as well as to the fertility of our fields and the growth-inducing properties of our climate? Let us compare Ontario with provinces in India or in China, whose people depend, for their sustenance, almost entirely upon a single commodity, rice. When their rice crop fails, they have no line of reserve upon which to fall back