

And eggs are ten cents a dozen! Ask any farmer how much profit he has made in the past two years. And we venture to say not one can lay claim to such a privilege. Then ask him if he thinks he can make up to \$5 per bird raising chickens, and he will look at you in a sad, wistful way suggestive of doubt as to your mental balance.

In conclusion it seems to us that as our governments appear unable to help the poultry industry they should at least desist from making it worse.

You will note that it says "over feed costs," so that the \$5 is net profit. Now, the average cost of feeding a chicken is \$2 a year, which makes \$7 gross per year, and there should be added another dollar for replacement, because you have to pay as much for the day-old chick as you get for it afterwards. And feeding a chicken for six or seven months is expensive. However, let us put it at \$7 gross income. At 10 cents a dozen, that would be 70 dozen, or 840 eggs, which would be the equivalent of 2½ eggs per day, and even in British Columbia our hens do not lay 2½ eggs per day, or 16 per week. A much more accurate figure would be one-half an egg per day, or perhaps a little more—say 4 per week instead of 16. Of course, I am taking an extreme figure when I suggest an average of 10 cents a dozen, and we hope that eggs will not long average that. Still, they are selling at that figure out there to-day. But, taking the reasonable average number of eggs that a hen would be likely to lay in a year to bring the gross profit to \$7, you would have to have an average of 37 cents a dozen; and as they vary, being sometimes 20 cents below that, it means that for a considerable time you would have to sell the eggs at 64 cents a dozen—that is, wholesale to the farmer—which, of course, is absolutely ridiculous.

It would seem unnecessary to waste time discussing such an idle statement, which requires, if it is to justify itself, that one hen shall lay 2½ eggs per day. But this statement has government sanction, and there are many people who, perhaps being less familiar with governments than we are, have a great respect for anything put out under the auspices of any government, and so they think that such statements must be accurate and worthy of attention. Statements of this sort published in the old country and in this country induce people to come here and go into the poultry business. I have heard it said that there cannot be much wrong with the poultry business because there are always so many people engaged in it. Yes, but they are not the same people; they vary. There are always a number coming in at the top, but there are just as many going out at the bottom, so that, as I say, they are not the same people. This

is doubly bad because not only do these men ruin themselves but they help to ruin others who are trying to make a living and who under ordinary conditions might make at least half a living. It is especially bad in this respect.

Suppose the government made some appeal to bring in tire manufacturers, let us say. They would immediately run up against practical men skilled in that business, who would at once ask a few pertinent questions in regard to opportunities, markets, cost of manufacture, and so on. This invitation on the part of the government to people interested in poultry is extended not to practical people but, unfortunately, to those who are wholly uninformed in regard to conditions in the poultry business. The appeal is made perhaps to small clerks who have been told by the doctor to get into the open air if possible; to small storekeepers tired of competition with the chain stores; sometimes even to farmers from the prairies, because a man can be quite well informed in regard to wheat and yet know practically nothing of the requisites of a successful poultry farm. These people read about 100 birds making a profit of \$500; they multiply this by two and say: Two hundred birds would give us a net profit of \$1,000 a year. A man says to his wife: "Why, Mary, look at this: if the government says that we can make that profit, there is nothing to hinder us from keeping 1,000 birds"—and 3,000 birds is quite a common poultry farm in British Columbia. The man says to his wife: "Supposing we cannot live up to the expectation of this claim; if we do even half as well; if we keep 2,000 birds, we shall make \$5,000 net," and that looks like a lot of money to people in those circumstances. So they go into the business. They take money that has been set aside for the education of their children; they sell out their little home, or business, if they have one, or their farm—I have known them to mortgage their life insurance—and they put the whole amount into what they think is going to give them a stable, comfortable, not too irksome living for the rest of their lives.

What is the result? The struggle lasts for a given length of time; you can almost estimate the time a man will stay in the business, judging by what reserves of capital he brings into it. Sometimes they last only a year; sometimes they struggle along, by infinite labour and hardship and by using up every resource they have, for two or three years, but the result is that within a comparatively short time they are cleaned out; they lose everything. I could take the minister or anyone else along the back roads of the agricultural sections of British Columbia