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## Those Farm Averages.

A REPORT emanating from the bureau of statistics at Ottawa a few days ago produces a number of figures in connection with farm values, livestock prices, etc., that give people something to think about. Many of the figures are being severely criticized, but it must be borne in mind that they cover a wide area, including sales of land, perhaps under forced circumstances, and also land that from its nature and location could not command a very high figure.

A glance over Western Ontario convinces any person that \$63 per acre, given as the average for Ontario, would bring up very few of a sale, if any at all worth considering.

Toronto man who is now looking for a 50-acre farm in this district has had offers of places, most of them from \$5,000 to \$7,000. One place near Blenheim asked \$275 per acre.

On the Governor's road a few days ago a 50-acre farm was sold for \$6,000, and the buildings were very old and in poor shape.

Then the statistics give the value of cattle. Cattle under one year are given at \$12, which causes one Delaware farmer to write saying he is in the market for 1,000 at that figure. Cattle, three years and over, are averaged at \$39, whereas \$50 is a fair figure, judging from recent sales in this district.

Milk cows are placed at \$51. Right now good milk cows are scarce around London district, one farmer going as far as to claim that there were not 20 for sale in 20 miles. This same farmer says \$100 for a good milk cow with calf at side is a much fairer figure. He went on to point out that farmers around here are not buying in the dark—that they don't want a poor cow at any price, preferring to know something of what they are buying rather than simply making the purchase because the price is down.

Western Ontario values are very much above the averages quoted in the bureau of statistics report. It is simply a reflection of the general excellence of the country around here and the good methods followed in the development of agriculture in its various branches.

## Mr. Fielding's Journey.

IT IS not a safe thing just now for Hon. W. S. FIELDING to buy a railroad ticket to any point in United States. It would be much better for him to get a car to Sarnia, and then sneak across on the ice at night, or get some person to run him through the tunnel privately.

The very fact that he is known to be in Washington and New York has spawned a new crop of rumors about future policies to be followed by the cabinet at Ottawa.

According to the political bias of the writers in Ottawa, Hon. W. S. FIELDING is either preparing to finance Canadian railways in New York, to revive the reciprocity pact in Washington, or to arrange for the handing over of the Dominion to the republic.

Were some new trade arrangement to be made between Canada and United States, no surprise would be caused. Such a move would not disrupt the tariff on manufactured goods, but there are many products of the soil that should pass freely from one country to the other. In these cases it seems to be the height of folly for two great nations to keep on piling brick for brick on a tariff wall all for no purpose.

Mr. FIELDING can be trusted to handle tariff legislation, and to do so carefully and wisely. He is now in close grips with the most complex financial situation any minister of finance ever faced, and he is not likely to let go of one dollar of revenue unless he sees where a correspondingly great advantage is to be gained for the Dominion.

In due season the finance minister will be back, and the people of Canada will learn that no evil thing has taken place because of his trip.

## Farmers and Freight Rates.

A recent convention of the Ontario Seed Growers' Association, a seed grower from the vicinity of Listowel, Ontario, testified that the best rate he could secure on shipments of single bushels of clover seed to points in Alberta, was \$5.20 by express, and \$5.05 by freight. Another member stated that last fall he paid \$5.50 express charges on a bag of seed oats shipped from Emo, in the Rainy River district, to Toronto.

It would seem that the Dominion Railway Commission is either short-sighted or impractical in allowing such a condition to exist. The movement of pure seed of any kind differs very widely from the movement of ordinary merchandise. Manufactured products are shipped to a certain destination for direct consumption; the railway never has the chance to haul them again. Raw materials of various kinds may be shipped to a manufacturing centre, whence they may or may not be shipped again in manufactured form. But the distribution of pure seed—clover, grain, grass, vegetable or



whatever it may be—is both a direct and indirect cause for an increase of business for Canadian railroads.

The distribution of pure seed means the production of bigger crops, with a consequent increase in shipments of grains and vegetables, milk and meat from the farming districts to the cities. The production of bigger crops is a long step in the general direction of increased farm prosperity, with a consequent increase in the haulage of manufactured goods from city to country points.

The railway commission would do well to consider the matter in this light and see what can be done to lower the carrying charges on pure seed. The lowering of the rates would be good business for the railways and the country alike.

Discussing this point with a well-versed farmer of Lambeth, the claim was advanced that the two instances cited above are by no means isolated cases. "They are typical," he claims, "of much evidence which could be produced to show that the present high freight and express rates discriminate against the man on the land. For the great bulk of his produce his market is the large town or city, and he must pay toll to the railway to carry his product to that market. Then the market in which he buys the most of what he consumes is located in the city, and he must pay more toll to the railway to carry his purchases back to his home. It may be argued that such a condition is inevitable, and one which must be assumed by the man who elects to make farming his occupation. Such argument would be sound in ordinary circumstances," he continued, "but in regard to railways Canada today is in no ordinary circumstances. She is almost hopelessly overbuilt in railways as compared with her population and possible volume of haulage. Until that condition can be rectified by an increase in population—and consequently an increase in total volume of business—carrying charges on our railroads must be high. But it seems unfair that the farmer, who must use the railroads more than any one else, should be penalized by a condition for which all classes are responsible. Merchandise cannot be carried from city to country points at a lower rate per mile than from city to city, but the rates for hauling farm produce from country point to city might very well be reduced. Such action would not be a spoon-feeding of the farming class; it would be a step to alleviate an unfair circumstance in which the farmer is placed on the equal responsibility of all classes of Canadian citizens. It would prove a great stimulant to farm business activity at the present time—and it is a well-established economic fact that national prosperity can be built only on the foundation of agricultural prosperity."

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